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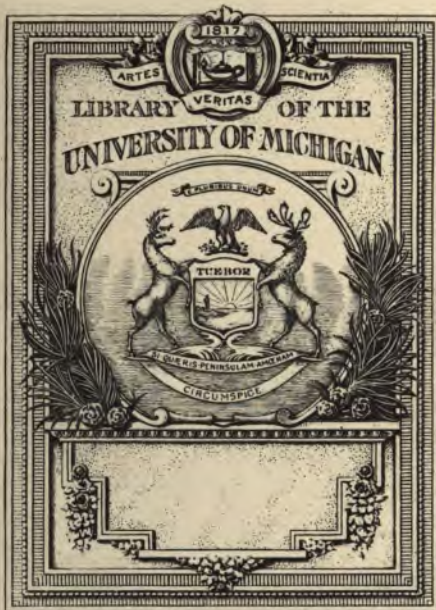
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THE  
PRACTICE  
OF  
TRUE DEVOTION,  
IN RELATION TO THE  
END, AS WELL AS THE MEANS,  
OF  
RELIGION.  
WITH AN  
OFFICE FOR THE HOLY COMMUNION.

~~~~~  
*Great Peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing shall offend  
them. PSAL. CXIX. 163.*

*Dum beatam querunt vitam, beatam agunt; et dum adhuc am-  
biant, jam consequuntur. S. EUCHER.*

~~~~~  
BY ROBERT NELSON, ESQ.

=====

THE TWENTY-THIRD EDITION.

=====

TO WHICH IS ADDED,  
THE CHARACTER OF THE AUTHOR.

~~~~~

London :

PRINTED FOR F. C. AND J. RIVINGTON,  
Booksellers to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge,  
No. 62, ST PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD;  
By Law and Gilbert, St. John's Square, Clerkenwell.

1811.

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THE  
PREFACE.

THE present divided State of Christianity, is so melancholy a Consideration to all Pious and Good Men, who thoroughly apprehend the dreadful Consequences of it; that they do not more frequently lament, than they do most fervently beg of God a sovereign Remedy for those unhappy Divisions that prevail in the World, and labour as earnestly in their several Stations to suggest such Methods as may prove most effectual to preserve the Unity of the Faith; and may have the greatest Tendency to reconcile the Minds of Men to one another.

*It is but too manifest, that among the many visible ill Effects of Parties, we may reasonably reckon, as a very considerable one, the great Decay of the Spirit and Life of Devotion; for while Men are so deeply concerned for their several Schemes, and pursue them with the Vigour of their Minds, and the Bent of their Affections; the solid and substantial Part of Religion is apt to evaporate; and "Charity, the very Bond of Peace and of all Virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before God," is but too frequently made a Sacrifice to those Differences that divide us. Not that any should forbear contending for the Faith once delivered to the Saints, Jude, ver. 3. according to the Exhortation of the holy Apostle; but that they should remember, as the same inspired Writer advises, when they build up themselves on their most holy Faith, that they pray in the Holy Ghost, and keep themselves*

## *The Preface.*

selves in the Love of God ; looking for the Mercy of our Lord JESUS CHRIST unto eternal Life, ver. 20, 21.

*In order therefore to give some Stop to this growing Evil, the following Method of Devotion is recommended to the constant Practice of all such Christians, who are not willing to content themselves with only a Form of Godliness ; and who are not desirous to be found among the Number of those that go such a fauntering Pace towards Heaven, as if they were indifferent whether they arrived or not at those Mansions of Bliss : The Design whereof is to fix in their Minds the great Duties of Religion, and to give them Hints how to exercise the same in their Thoughts, Words, and Actions ; and moreover to press them to a frequent and serious Use of the Means of Grace, with that Aim and Purpose that they may be transformed by the renewing of their Minds.*

*To make these more effectual, in the latter Part are added Prayers for the Cloſet, and for the Family, and at the Holy Communion, and upon other Occaſions that require our Addreſs to GOD; and the Whole contrived in ſo ſhort a Compaſs, that it might be eaſily purchaſed by the poorer Sort, for whoſe Uſe this Undertaking was chiefly engaged in; and to whoſe Salvation I beg of GOD it may prove effectual.*

*Auguſt 25,  
1701.*

**ROB<sup>t</sup>. NELSON.**

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ON

## MR. NELSON.

**SUCH** were the Lines :—such Majesty and Grace  
Chose to erect their Throne in NELSON's Face :  
Where'er that pleasing Form did once appear,  
The World confess'd—the Christian Hero's here.  
Shall then so bright a Name forgotten lie!  
Tomb'd with his *Dust* shall his *Remembrance* die?  
His kindred Saints, with just and pious Care  
To After-ages he recorded fair :  
Let NELSON now himself adorn the *Calendar*. }

ONCE in an Age Heav'n such a Pattern lends,  
Its Foes to silence; and support its Friends.  
What Virtue did his shining Worth compleat?  
Gen'rous, not Proud; without Ambition Great:  
To others mild, as to himself severe:  
Polish'd, tho' learn'd; Obliging, yet sincere;  
Justly with Admiration seen and read;  
For all must own the Christian was well-bred.  
His Goodness such, as if no native Taint  
Had reach'd his Soul; as he were born a Saint:  
Diffusing round an unaffected Smile,  
Calm as his Speech, and even as his Style:  
His Style, as Logic close, and sweet as Song;  
Tho' short, yet full; tho' plain and easy, strong.  
The Writer most, but all the Man esteem:  
For few could write, and fewer live like him.  
Unstain'd his Youth by Criminal Desire,  
Nor glow'd his Breast with ought but heav'nly Fire.

What

What Manly Strength, with flowing Sweetness join'd,  
 Adorn'd at once his Works, and Face, and Mind!  
 How wide did his Beneficence extend!  
 Above the Meanness of a private End;  
 The fairest Judge, and the best natur'd Friend. }  
 What Candor, NELSON, did thy Life adorn!  
 How large thy Soul!—Thou for the World wert born  
 Old *Albion's* Cliffs, with rugged *Cambria's* Wild,  
 And fierce *Ierne*, heard thy Name and smil'd:  
 Thy Name the tawny *Malabar* has known,  
 Beyond the wide *Atlantic* Gulf 'tis flown.  
 Nor ought so mean as Gold thy Cares employ'd,  
 Nor sordid Pelf, destructive while enjoy'd;  
 But that for which thy LORD a Ransom gave,  
 Which cost the precious Blood of GOD to save.  
 Exalted Worth, like thine, Applause commands,  
 From warring Factions and contending Lands:  
 The *Romish* Schism and ours in this agree,  
 And wonder at each other's Charity.  
 No narrow Party NELSON's Love confin'd,  
 But, like the Sun, it shone on all Mankind;  
 The Cottage and the Palace bless'd his Rays,  
 Ador'd the Maker, and the Work did praise.

IN Words that match'd his Sense, sublime and neat,  
 He taught the Noble to be truly Great:  
 To emulate alone in Virtue's Strife,  
 And scorn the Trappings and the Gauds of Life:  
 To know 'tis more, far more of true Renown,  
 Ourselves to conquer than to storm a Town.  
 The Men of Letters might from NELSON learn,  
 What always not the greatest Clerks discern;

Truth

Truth and fair Manners too (at once) retain,  
 Nor strive unlawfully, nor strive in vain.  
 His *well-weigh'd Judgment* could avoid Extremes  
 Of formal Seemings, and Enthusiast Dreams.  
 Who made the compound Man, demands him whole,  
 Not thoughtless Matter, or unbody'd Soul:  
 His Institutions are for both design'd,  
 To rule the Body, and to raise the Mind:  
 For both did NELSON's Pen and Life contend,  
 Nor careless of the Way, nor mindless of the End.  
 His Stations fix'd, as the returning Year:  
 Yet nought to see of haughty or severe:  
 No *Pharisaic* Gloom did e'er disgrace  
 GOD's Image well express'd in NELSON's Face.  
 The four *Judean* Youths did thus appear,  
 Who homely Pulse preferr'd to Regal fare.  
 Thus *Moses*, when for forty Days he trod  
 The Heights of *Sinai*, and convers'd with God.  
 What Glories then, too pow'rful to be borne,  
 What doubl'd Splendor did his Heav'nly Face adorn?  
 — But milder Lustre we in NELSON see,  
 Rebated by his Veil of Modesty;  
 Yet still renew'd: — As soon the Sun to set,  
 As he his Lands and Vespers could forget.  
 He \* oft, when Night with *holy Hymns* was worn,  
 Prevented Prime, and wak'd the rising Morn:  
 Nor needed the *Carthusian's* *Matin* Bell,  
 Which drags the drowsy *Hermit* from his Cell.  
 Unforc'd by Vows, his pure Devotions rise,  
 And voluntary flow, like Streams in Paradise.

---

\* This I personally know to be true. He sang Bishop KERN's Hymns.

With *Praise* he made the *Sabbath* yet more blest'd,  
The Means and Emblem of Eternal Rest.

Taught how to take the mystic *Bread* and *Wine*,  
T'adore the Substance, nor neglect the Sign;  
Nor those despise, to whom Commission's giv'n,  
Thro' all the World, to deal the *Dole* of Heav'n.  
Tho' some their Pastors Lives with Rigour scan,  
And prize the Office as they like the Man;  
What shining Virtues in the *Priest* appear,  
Their gracious Condescension may revere;  
But if a *Judas* Heav'nly Tidings tells,  
Their Hate of Sin preserves them Infidels.

NELSON more wise, their empty Scoffs disdain'd,  
Since Weakness makes not the *Commission* feign'd,  
A just Respect could for the Office find,  
(Yet deep his *Learning*, yet enlarg'd his Mind)  
Nor paid *implicit* Faith, nor shew'd Obedience blind.

HE shew'd that *Warmth* and *Strength* might well agree,  
In sober, strong, affecting Piety.

Nor e'er should Reason and Devotion part,  
The coolest Head suits best the warmest Heart.

Yet Champion for the Faith, he wisely knew  
How small a Prospect terminates our View:

That Infinite no Finite comprehends,  
That here our Faith begins, and Reason ends.

He strove for Truth, nor sought, yet gain'd Applause;  
His Candour Praise, if not Conviction, draws,  
Far as a Mortal can, deserving of his Cause.

For Zeal and Moderation well agree,  
And constant Firmness hurts not Charity.

He oft the Way has to those Wand'ers shown,  
Reason idolize; but 'tis their own:

Who

Who measure Faith by Mathematic Line;  
 By Human Wisdom would correct Divine:  
 At all their empty Vauntings undismay'd,  
 Their Schemes he in the *Sacred Balance* weigh'd:  
 The *Scale* flew up, their *Proofs* than *Air* more light,  
 Triumph'd the *Faith*, and *Error* fled to *endless Night*.  
 With *pious Zeal* the *frozen World* he warm'd;  
 And thus against each sly Seducer arm'd;  
 " Shall Truth for long Possession less be priz'd?  
 " Because, 'tis Venerable, be despis'd?  
 " What is Eternal, never can decay;  
 " 'Tis still in Bloom, while Ages roll away:  
 " *Falseness*, like *Vice*, is wither'd while 'tis new,  
 " Not all its Paint can hide its odious Hue.  
 " Beware the *Hag*, beware that *Siren Face*!  
 " Death's in her *Smiles*, and Hell in her *Embrace*."

Nor was his Soul of so confin'd a View,  
 As what was *Good* to slight, because 'tis new.  
 Nothing was e'er of Public Use propos'd,  
 But with the Project NELSON warmly clos'd;  
 Turn'd, and improv'd, and brought at last to bear,  
 Supported by his Bounty and his Care.  
 He ne'er unaided could his SAVIOUR see  
 By Sicknefs press'd, or Chains, or Penury.  
 All Shapes of Woe his gen'rous Pity mov'd,  
 His Maker's Face he saw, and seeing lov'd.  
 Yet farther Love his Piety has shewn,  
 Not to the Body's Wants confin'd alone;  
 Instructing all to place their Hopes on high,  
 Resign'd to Live, and innocent to Die.  
 'Tis kind to heal the Wounds th' Afflicted feels,  
 'Tis kinder still preventing future Ills.

On Infant Heads behold his Bounty flows,  
 Preserv'd from Guilt, and sure attending Woes:  
 Their Manners form'd aright with early Care,  
 Ere blasted yet their Bloom with tainted Air.  
 'Tis *This* must stop th' Infection of our Crimes,  
 And firm Foundation lay for brighter Times;  
 For *This*, to GOD are solemn Praises giv'n,  
 And *Crowds* of *Orphans* send their Songs to Heav'n;  
 O Glorious Alms! O Goodness best design'd!  
 To feed the Body and to save the Mind.  
 Our SAVIOUR, Gracious, gave his Hearers Bread,  
 His Sermons teaching whom his Wonders fed.

How far diffus'd his Charity discreet!  
 How vast th' Advantage to be Good and Great!  
 How *Godlike* may the Rich the Blessings show'r,  
 Whene'er their Will is equal to their Pow'r!  
 How wide their Pow'r to benefit Mankind;  
 "Who Mercy shew, only shall Mercy find."  
 What various *Good* the *Theme* of NELSON's Thought,  
 Who living practis'd what the dying taught!  
 What Heat divine his latest Counsel breathes!  
 He leaves his Art, as he his Soul bequeaths.  
 Let this, ye *Mighty*, your Ambition be,  
 To improve his friendly, noble Legacy.  
 The Benefactor-Saint is now no more:  
 Be griev'd, ye Virtuous; and lament, ye Poor!  
 Since not 'till we another NELSON find,  
 His loss will be repair'd to all Mankind.

LET Friendship's sacred Name at least excuse  
 This last Effort of a retiring Muse.  
 For NELSON oft she strung her humble Lyre,  
 And to this Tomb may decently expire.

S. N.

THE  
NATURE AND WISDOM  
OF  
TRUE DEVOTION.

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THE INTRODUCTION.

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*Treating of Devotion in General.*

THERE are too many, God knows, in all Communion, who place all their Devotion in the *Means* of Religion; provided they pray customarily, hear many Sermons, and sometimes receive the Holy Communion, they conclude the Man of God made perfect; they think nothing more necessary to entitle them to the Favour of the Almighty; or if they are sensible they fall short of their Duty in other Particulars, yet they flatter

B

them.

themselves, that their exactness in the external Parts of Religion will make Amends for all such Defects. Whereas, in Truth, the Design of all those Means of Grace God has established in Christianity, was to conduct us to solid and substantial Piety, to plant in our Minds the Love and Fear of God's holy Name, and an utter Abhorrence of every Thing that is Evil; to make us just and upright in all our Dealings with our Neighbour, temperate in all our Enjoyments, charitable towards the Needy and Afflicted, and zealous for the Salvation of our Brethren; and farther so to spiritualize our Affections, that they might be raised above the trifling Concerns of this perishing Life, and fixed upon a Good that is everlasting and immutable. So that if we do not use them to this End and Purpose, they will no Ways be acceptable in God's Sight, but rather provoke his Wrath and Indignation against us, and increase our Condemnation, in that we pervert the very Means of our Recovery.

To Pray frequently, to Read and Hear the holy Word of God, to Receive the blessed Sacrament, to Fast, to Examine ourselves, to Meditate upon divine Subjects, are all holy and Christian Actions, what God requires from us; and therefore, without Doubt, the Performance of them, as they are fit to promote our Salvation, so they tend to his Honour and Glory: But yet, if this were the only

only Path that leadeth to eternal Life, there would not be so few that find it. God expects that we should become New Creatures; that the prevailing Temper and Bent of our Souls should be, to bring forth all the Fruits of Righteousness; that we should sacrifice to him our darling Passions and Inclinations, and whatsoever opposeth his divine Will. The Victim we should offer, should be the Idol of our Heart, that which corrupt Nature most inclines us to, that which bad Custom confirms and nourishes in us. The Covetous are easily prevailed upon to renounce that Luxury of Life, that is maintained by the Extravagance of Expences. And Vanity may persuade others to relieve the Necessities of the Poor, from that public Applause that is paid to Charity: but still these Sacrifices are very imperfect, because the darling Passion is still retained. In these Cases, the vain Man must become Modest and Humble, and glory only in the Lord; and the covetous Man must abound in Alms-deeds, and fix his Mind upon durable Riches: The Cholerick and Revengeful, may preserve themselves from the ill Effects of the tender Passions; and the Soft and Effeminate may find no great Difficulty to suppress their Resentments: But if the Revengeful could be persuaded to turn his Anger against himself, and the Man of Pleasure to place his Delight in God, both might be numbered amongst the truly devout.

Therefore, we must use the Means of Grace, in order to overcome the irregular Motions of our own Hearts; in order to give up that to God, which Nature would reserve for herself: This is the shortest and surest Way.

And as we must use the Means of Religion, in order to the afore-mentioned End and Purpose, so we must not be partial in the Use of those Means, pick out some, and leave out others. For we must look upon ourselves in the Hands of God, as sick Men in the Hands of an able Physician, who requires an exact Compliance with all his Prescriptions; that some Medicines should be taken at one Time, some at another, and that none be omitted; the Patient's Recovery depending not so much upon one Medicine, as upon the punctual Use of all he has directed: For want of this Observation, I am afraid, many fall short in working out their Salvation; for God, who knows our Frame, and remembers that we are but Dust, has suited the Means of our Recovery to the complicated Maladies of our Souls; so that if we neglect any of them, we may justly fear being disappointed in attaining solid and substantial Piety, which is the true Health of our Minds.

Thus some lay the great Stress upon hearing of Sermons, as if the Knowledge of their Duty were the one Thing necessary. Others are so entirely devoted to the Prayers of the Church, that they have but a mean Opinion  
of

of those Instructions that are delivered by the Priests of the Lord, *whose Lips are to Preserve Knowledge*; as if desiring God to make us Good, were sufficient, without the Knowledge of the Way and Manner of being so. Some depend upon their private Devotions, for mortifying the Deeds of the Flesh, even to the contempt of Fasting, as a Piece of Will-worship, though it is a Christian Duty, enjoined for the bringing under our Bodies. Others are punctual in their bodily Exercises, but neglect those Prayers which are necessary to make them effectual. And those who are engaged in the Use of some, or all of these Means, yet live in a most shameful Neglect of Receiving the Holy Sacrament, as if that were no Ways necessary to enable them to grow in Grace; whereas it was instituted to that very End and Purpose, that the Benefits of Christ's Death might thereby be conveyed to them. Therefore, if ever we sincerely desire to succeed in our holy Purposes, we must constantly and diligently make Use of all those Means which God has ordained towards the obtaining eternal Life; since it is by the joint Use of them all, that we are *made meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*.

There is another Extreme, which I hope is the Case of but few; but since it is incident to those who make the greatest Pretences to Spirituality, it ought to be taken Notice

## 6      *The Nature and Wisdom of*

of; which is, from a Purpose of greater Perfection, to lay aside the ordinary Means of Grace, which God has established: They frequent not the Instructions of God's Ambassadors, because they find themselves more enlightened from their own Meditations: They approach not frequently the holy Communion, to feed themselves with the Bread of Life there distributed, because they feel not those Raptures, which they are supplied with from their own Contemplations: They seem to have a mean Opinion of all the holy Functions of the Priesthood, because the men that exercise them are not animated with their Spirit.

Now that this is a great Delusion is apparent, because it contradicts that Order and Method that God has revealed for the attaining everlasting Happiness. He has set apart an Order of Men under the Gospel, on Purpose to assist us in the great Business of our Salvation: He has given them Power to declare to us the Terms upon which it is to be obtained; they are the deputed Ministers of Reconciliation, and therefore we ought to attend their Instructions: He has farther authorized them to administer Sacraments, that we might be made Members of Christ's Body, and nourished with all Goodness. These holy Actions receive their Efficacy from the divine Institution, which we must keep close to if we pretend to receive the

the Influences and Assistances of God's Holy Spirit. To enlighten our Understandings in the Knowledge of our Duty, to influence our Wills in the Practice of it, he has revealed to us the holy Scripture, which as it lays down the best Method for the attaining that Perfection we are capable of in this Life; so it furnishes us with the best Arguments for the Prosecution of it: And though I am satisfied, that the Spirit of God does farther direct and excite those that seriously and reverently apply themselves to the Use of this Rule of Belief and Practice; yet they that lay it aside, under Pretence of Inspirations of equal Authority, have Reason to doubt their own Inspirations. For if they proceeded from the Spirit of God, they would put the greatest Stress and highest Value upon what has been stamped with his Mark, by being confirmed by the Testimony of Miracles, the Demonstration of the Spirit and what has been received by the Catholic Church, as the undoubted Word of God: Besides, since it is agreed that we are unable of ourselves to do any Thing that is good; and that the Grace of God is necessary to strengthen our Weakness, and to assist us in the Performance of our Duty; how can we expect the Influences of his Holy Spirit, if we neglect the Use of those Means which are prescribed by divine Institution, to convey to us the Benefits and Advantages of it?

It is certain, therefore, that as we should not so rely upon any outward Performance, as to neglect the Improvement of our Minds, lest our Fasting become an unprofitable Trouble, and our Prayers a vain Lip Labour; so neither should we pretend to inward Perfection, by slighting the outward Observances of Religion, lest our Thoughts grow proud and fantastic, and all our Arguments prove but a cover for Delusion. A Man may be a bad Man, and use them all; and yet there is no being good without them.

From hence it appears, That *true Devotion* is not so properly a particular Virtue, as it is the Way and Manner of performing all the Instances of our Duty; and that it consists in a *constant and ready Cheerfulness of Mind in doing the Will of God, however manifested to us*: for this shews we are entirely devoted to his Service. It is an Earnestness of Soul to be conformed in every Thing to the divine Pleasure; so that the Covetous do not more eagerly long for Wealth, the Ambitious for Honour, and the Epicure for Pleasure, than the devout Soul does to live in all the Commandments of the Lord blameless: That is to say, that he is ready to sacrifice the Satisfactions of Life, and to expose even Life itself, to gratify this Desire, which inflames his Heart: all the Ways that lead to Heaven, are the Objects of his Delight; and he would willingly

willingly choose the most rugged and straiteſt Way, provided it does but prove the ſhorteſt and the ſureſt.

This truly religious Temper of Mind, which we call *Devotion*, will put us upon enquiring into all the Particulars of our Duty, which we owe both to God and Man; we ſhall be at a Stand no longer than till we know the Way wherein we ſhould talk. The natural Language of ſuch a Soul is, *Lord, what wouldſt Thou have me to do?* Let me but be acquainted with thy Will, and I am ready to obey it: Nothing can abate his Courage, or cool his Zeal, in ſteadfaſtly purſuing what he is convinced God's Laws require from him.

He bears with admirable Compoſedneſs all the various Humours of thoſe with whom he converſes, which too often diſorder and affect weak Minds. The Senſe of his own great Imperfections, neither diſquiet nor diſcourage him, but make him more diligent to reform and amend them. His conſtant Employment is, to ſubdue his Paſſions, to quell thoſe Storms that are apt to ariſe in his Mind; and he contemns all the vain Cenſures of worldly Men, which ſeek to ruffle and diſcompoſe him. He aims at Perfection, by an exact Performance of the Duties of that Station wherein the Providence of God has placed him. He lives not according to the Fleſh, but according to the Spirit; and

is dead to the World, and to all the Cares and Enjoyments of it. He lays a greater Stress upon doing his Duty, than upon those outward or inward Consolations that attend it. He is no Ways terrified by those Difficulties that are sometimes strewed in the Path of Life; they rather raise his Courage, increase his Resolution, and make him more intent upon Victory. Prosperity and Adversity appear to him no farther agreeable or grievous, than as they advance or hinder his great design. He frequents not the Assemblies of the Men of Pleasure; but sets a greater Value upon his Time, than to consume it in trifling and unnecessary Diversions. His greatest Delight is, to mortify his Senses, to live by Faith; well knowing, that the Things which are seen are Temporal, but that the Things which are not seen are Eternal. His chiefest Pleasure is, to converse with God; and therefore you find him so often in the Church and at the Altar, as the surest Places to enjoy him here below. Whenever he appears in the Presence of infinite Love, he adores with the lowest Humiliation of Soul and Body. He frequents the public Prayers, and receives the holy Communion with heavenly Affections, and with holy Impatience for the Blessings of God's Love. In the Midst of Business his Mind is upon Heaven; and even in Conversation with others, he silently breathes forth pious Ejacula-

Ejaculations to the blessed Object of his Love and Desire. He lives under a constant Sense of God's Omnipresence; and therefore he is not more upon his Guard not to offend Him, than he is intent upon doing those Things that are acceptable in his Sight.

And this his Devotion does not more influence his own Conduct, than appear amiable and pleasing to all about him. For the *Sick* and *Needy* will love your Devotion if they find Comfort and Relief from it. Your *Family* will love your Devotion, if it make you Meek, Quiet, and Peaceable. Your *Superiors* will love your Devotion, if it makes you more Submissive and Obedient. And all *Men* will love your Devotion, if it makes you Faithful and Sincere, Courteous and Affable, ready to do all good Offices, and to comply with their Inclinations, when it no Way contradicts your Duty; and above all, if in the Practice of your own Exercises of Piety, you do not censure and condemn them when their Conduct is different from your own, and you do not think them obliged to govern themselves exactly by your Rules and Measures.

I am very well aware that the Description I have made of Devotion, somewhat differs from the common Apprehensions of Men concerning it. In Discourse, we generally understand by a devout Man, one who prays often, with all the Appearances of a Serious and Religious Mind; and the frequent Exer-

cise of the Means of Grace, especially Prayer, seems to have engrossed the Character of Devotion. Now though this is so far true, that we in vain pretend to this spiritual Frame of Mind, except we employ the Vigour of our Souls in the sincere and attentive Use of all the Means of Grace, especially in frequent and fervent Prayer to God; yet we shall fall short of this Character, and the Reward that is prepared for it, if we stop here. These are happy Instruments of enabling us to work out our Salvation; but except we bring forth the Fruit of the Spirit, *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance*; except we *crucify the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts thereof*; except we *live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit*, we shall not *inherit the Kingdom of Heaven*, that infinite Happiness that is promised to all devout Souls.

I am very sensible this Practice of Devotion passes very often, in the judgment of worldly and *sensual Men*, for Folly and Indiscretion: It is blamed as carrying Things to an Extreme; as laying unnecessary Burdens upon ourselves; and they charge those that pursue it, as not knowing how to accommodate themselves to Times and Seasons: as neglecting the true Measures and Rules of Things; they account his Life Madness; that he feeds himself with idle Fancies, and pursues them by an over-heated Imagination.

To destroy an Opinion so false in itself, and so injurious to Devotion, it is necessary to observe, that the Perfection of Wisdom ought to have these two Qualifications; to propose the best End, and to choose the Means as are fittest to attain it. Where the first is wanting, our Labour may pass for Folly, and the most serious Application may be esteemed a trifling Amusement; and when we miscarry in the latter, we reap nothing by our Pains but Disappointment.

Now if we measure the Conduct of the Devout by this Rule, pray, wherein is it defective? The only End they propose in all their Actions, is to serve Almighty God, the Fountain of their Being; and to prepare themselves for the Enjoyment of Him, the Perfection of Happiness.

We commend a Man, who having it in his Choice engages in the Service of a Prince who is wise and generous; who glories in being true to his Word, and never abandons those that depend upon him: And by this Test, nothing can be more judicious than the Conduct of the Devout: for they give up themselves to a *God*, who *only has Immortality*; who is incapable of not performing what he has promised, either through Treachery or Weakness; to a *Master*, who openly declares himself in Favour with all those that belong to him, and makes every Thing *work for Good*

to

*to them that love him; to a Master, in short, to whom every Thing submits.*

The World, we know has but a mean Opinion of those, who have a Regard only to the present; who do not apply themselves to secure a comfortable and happy Old Age, and to establish such Fortunes as may make their Posterity considerable: Although at the same Time, no Body can be sure of lengthening their Days, or leaving of Children to enjoy their Acquisitions. Can there be therefore any greater Wisdom than to carry our Views into Eternity itself, which will infallibly succeed to the few Years we live? And this is the Wisdom of the Devout.

Even in *Politics*, where Prudence is thought to have its noblest and principal Employment, the most discerning lay it down as an established Maxim, always to have our chiefest Interest in View, to dispense with Matters of small Consequence, and to sacrifice inconsiderable Pretensions, in order to secure those that are essential. But what are all the Projects of the greatest Princes, and of their ablest Ministers, in comparison of that general End, at which all Men ought to aim? In comparison of that Affair, where the Gaining or Losing eternal Happiness is concerned, and of losing it without the Possibility of any Recovery? From whence it follows, that it is most reasonable to neglect all Things, even Life itself,  
rather

rather than not secure our Salvation, because they are of much less Importance ; and that the Devout, who, for this Reason, little value what the World most esteems, read a Lesson, of Prudence even to the Politicians themselves, which has more intrinsic Worth in it, than all their boasted Maxims.

Besides, they who are the great Masters in Politics, do not only give great Affairs the Preference to those of less Moment, but there is nothing they do so inconsiderable, that does not tend to advance their End : So that it may be really said, they have but *one* Business. Their most indifferent Discourse, their most common Actions, even their Diversions and their Leisure, are concerted and done with Design; for which Reason, all their Steps are narrowly observed, and as industriously studied by others. Now surely this abundantly justifies the Prudence and Zeal of such, who are not satisfied only to labour for the chief End, and to have a Sort of Contempt for all other Things; but to think it necessary always to keep this End in view; to govern all their Thoughts and Actions so that they may have some Tendency that Way; that every Thing may have a Reference to God and Eternity, and may in some Manner prove serviceable to promote their eternal Salvation.

And the Devout are not more distinguished by their Wisdom, in proposing the best End, than they are by those Means they  
make

make Use of in order to attain it. Now in this Choice, Prudence always prefers such as lead to it with the greatest Security and Expedition! and looks upon that Way to be the best, that is the shortest and the surest. Therefore if they condemn the World, and its false Maxims; if they crucify the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts thereof, they follow the Dictates of infinite Wisdom, who, when incarnate, not only recommended *Self-denial* and *Mortification* by his divine Precepts, but set us the Pattern of it by his own perfect Example: And who can guide us in the Paths of Bliss so surely, as He who is *the Wisdom of the Father*?

Yet if, after all, the World reproaches you for giving up yourself to a Life of Devotion: If it ridicules you for interrupting your Commerce with the Vain and Foolish, that is, the sinful Part of Mankind, consider from whence these Reflections come. Is it not from such as think themselves mighty prudent in doing that for the World, which you do for Heaven; who are so involved in Business or Pleasure, that they have no Leisure for the Concerns of their Souls; who, from the Maxims of false Wisdom, subject Religion to their worldly Interest, and even persuade themselves that Religion itself is but a Piece of Policy, which ought to be adjusted to Times, and to the Necessities of Temporal Affairs? Good God! shall it be Folly, Indiscretion, and Madness, to do that *for Thee*,  
that

that the World does *against* Thee ! and shall Zeal be never reasonable, but when it supports Impiety ?

But nothing does so sensibly justify the Wisdom of Devotion, as that Peace, and Comfort, and Joy, that attends it upon a Death-Bed. There are then *two* Prospects, which entirely employ the Mind of a Man, viz. what he has been, and what he is about to be : For standing as it were upon the Brink of Time and Eternity, his Thoughts are divided between that Time which is about to conclude, and that Eternity which is about to begin ; and according to what presents itself upon these Views, the Man is either oppressed with Horror and Amazement, or comforted with Joy and Satisfaction.

Now, to a devout Man, who has made it the Business of his Life to serve God with all the Strength and Vigour of his Soul, the Reflection upon what is past, does in no wise make Death terrible to him ; because in going out of Life, he leaves nothing but what he has always contemned and despised, and carries with him what he judged worthy of his Love and esteem. His Body he parts with, without Regret, because he has maintained a perpetual War against it, and now sees it conclude by the entire Defeat of his Enemy ; besides, he lays it down in the Dust, with a full Assurance that he shall receive it again *glorious, spiritual and incorruptible*. His  
great

great Study has been to fit loose to the World; and he never valued his Riches, but as instruments of doing Good. So that now they are about to vanish, he rather rejoices in the true Judgment he made concerning them, and triumphs, that by the Grace of God he was enabled to make so right a Choice in a Matter of such Consequence.

The remembrance of his penitential and retired Life, then fills his Soul with unspeakable Comfort; and his Time, which has always been well employed, and rendered precious by so many fervent Exercises of Piety, by so many good Works, by so many excellent Virtues, presents itself to his Memory as a great Treasure, as a Heap of immense Riches, which will infallibly accompany him into the other World. Blessed be God! he descends not into the Chambers of Death naked and stript, neither does he leave behind him the Fruit of his Labour and his Pains; for these are Goods that he can carry with him, and are not to be shared among those that survive him.

The precious Promises of God, made to his faithful Servants, then raise him, under the Sense of his own Weakness; because he has been enabled, by the Power of his Grace, to attain, in some Measure, those Virtues, which, for Christ's Sake, God has promised to reward that Humility, which shall be exalted; that Mourning, which shall be comforted;

forted; those Tears which shall be changed into eternal Consolation; that Contempt of the World, to which belongs the Kingdom of God; that Purity, which disposes for the beatific Vision; that Self-denial, to which is promised a Hundred-fold! and all those Works of Mercy, for which Heaven was prepared before the Beginning of the World.

And as what is past gives him rather Joy than Sorrow; so what is to come, renders his Joy full and complete. For what is there in that terrible Judgment that follows Death, that should frighten or amaze a truly devout Soul? What is there in that Judgment, that does not administer to him Comfort and Support? It is true, an Inquiry will then be made into all our Thoughts, Words, and Actions: into those Talents we have been entrusted with, and into the Use we have made of all those temporal good Things which have been committed to our Stewardship; and this is just Matter of Horror and Amazement to those who have contemned and despised the Council of God, who have cast his Laws behind their Backs, who have shewn no Regard for the Ways of Piety and Devotion. But to a Regular Christian, who has been fervent and zealous in his Master's Service, what more desirable than an Account of this Nature?

A General, who in six Months Time has gained Battles, taken Towns, reduced Provinces;

vinces ; who has spared neither Labour nor Blood to make the Arms of the Prince victorious ; what does he long for more, than to come to Court, to produce the spoils taken from the Enemy ; to shew his Wounds, and to relate to his Prince the Detail of so glorious a Campaign ? it is a terrible Thing to be obliged to give an Account of so great and so important an Administration, as that which we are entrusted with, when it has been the least Part of our Care faithfully to discharge it ; when the Interest of our Master has been totally neglected. But can any Thing be more grateful than giving an Account when Gains and Profits, and Increase can be pleaded ; When they can say with the faithful Servant in the Gospel, *Lord, thou gavest me five Talents, behold, I have gained five Talents more.* ‘ I acknowledge, O Lord, I ought  
‘ to have made a greater Improvement of thy  
‘ Gifts ; however, I have not wrapt up my  
‘ Talents in a Napkin, but by thy Grace I  
‘ have been enabled to increase them. Thou  
‘ hast given me Riches, but I have not used  
‘ them to support Luxury and Vanity ; the  
‘ Poor have had their Share, as well as my  
‘ Family ; I have clothed thy Members, and  
‘ adorned the Place where thy Honour dwel-  
‘ eth. Thou hast given me the Command of  
‘ Time ; I never thought so great a Treasure  
‘ was granted me only to be trifled away : I  
‘ have

‘ have consecrated my Leisure to the Medi-  
‘ tation of thy divine Laws, to the Contem-  
‘ plation of the Christian Mysteries, to the  
‘ Instruction and Sanctification of others; my  
‘ Visits have been made to the Sick and  
‘ Weak; my Business has been to comfort  
‘ the Distressed, to pacify and reconcile those  
‘ Differences which have unhappily risen  
‘ among my Neighbours. Thou hast given  
‘ me Eyes, I have used them in reading pious  
‘ and devout Books. Thou hast given me  
‘ Ears, which have been always open to thy  
‘ Word, and to such Discourse as was edi-  
‘ fying. Thou hast given me a Tongue,  
‘ whose greatest Pleasure has been to speak  
‘ either to Thee, or of Thee. I have en-  
‘ deavoured to make a good Use of all thy  
‘ holy Inspiration. Thou hast disposed me  
‘ to Retirement, and I have avoided the  
‘ Conversation of the great World. Thou  
‘ hast inclined me to mortify my Senses, and  
‘ I have deprived myself of the most tempt-  
‘ ing Pleasures. Thou hast given me a De-  
‘ sire to pray and I have persisted in it, in  
‘ Despite of all Discouragements. Thou  
‘ hast required me to love my Brother; and  
‘ Thou knowest, O Lord, I have never  
‘ omitted praying for my Enemies. Thou  
‘ hast sent me Sickness, and I have borne it  
‘ with Patience, without Murmuring; great  
‘ Losses, and I have blessed thy holy Name;  
‘ Calamities

‘ Calamities and Afflictions, and I have received them with Thanksgiving.’

When Accounts are in this State and Condition, there is Joy and Comfort in the *Examination* of them. And the well-grounded Hope of God’s Favour, and of receiving that joyful Sentence, *Come ye Blessed*; is so great a Source of Consolation in that gloomy Season, upon the approach of Death, when the Men of this World are seized with Trembling and Astonishment, that it is impossible to express the Satisfaction and Transport to a devout Soul, upon the Point of concluding a toilsome and laborious Life, exposed to so many and so great Dangers; and ready to take Possession of those durable Riches, those lasting Honours, and those never failing Pleasures, which are at God’s right-Hand for evermore.

So that if the Love of the most perfect and most amiable Object is Wisdom; and if the continual and delightful Enjoyment of what one loves, and the certain Expectation of enjoying it eternally, may be accounted Pleasure: I hope the devout Man’s Choice may be sufficiently justified. *Grant only O Lord, who hast prepared for them that love Thee such good Things as pass Man’s Understanding, that my Heart may be in such Love towards Thee, that I*

*above all Things, may obtain thy Promises,  
will exceed all that I can desire, through Jesus  
Christ our Lord. Amen.*

THE  
PRACTICE OF TRUE DEVOTION,  
IN RELATION BOTH TO THE  
END AND MEANS  
OF  
*RELIGION.*

CHAP. I.

*A General Method for the Exercise of*  
TRUE DEVOTION.

**B**EFORE I come to treat of particular Virtues, which are the *End of Religion*, and of those Methods which are established for the attaining of them, which are the *Means of Religion*, I design to lay down some Rules for the general Conduct of a Christian Life; and to acquaint Men at the same Time, with those Occasions and Opportunities when they

they may put them in Practice. None ought to be surpris'd if they find some difficulty at the Beginning, in making Use of them: The first Attempts in any Thing that is excellent, are always attended with Labour and Pains; but if Men will be perswaded to persevere in them for a Season, with some Degree of Resolution, Custom and the Grace of God will quickly make them easy and pleasant.

I. RISING. As soon as thou wakest from Sleep, dedicate thy first Thoughts to God, whose Providence has preserved you from the Dangers of the past Night; adore his Goodness, and express your Thankfulness in some short Ejaculations; exercise your Love and Affection towards him, or any other Virtue your Thoughts shall suggest to you: And in order that the devout Soul may be provided with fit Materials for this Purpose, I cannot but advise the getting of the Three *Hymns* without Book, for *Morning, Evening, and Midnight*, which are added at the End of this Treatise, among the Devotions. The Trouble of charging your Memory will be quickly past, the daily repeating of them will make you perfect in them, but the good Fruit of them will abide with you all your Days. Use yourself to a constant Hour of Rising, and continue in your Bed no longer than you have offered up your first Thoughts to God: This will prevent Laziness, and hinder vain,

loose, and extravagant Thoughts, which will be ready to rise in our Minds, when we amuse ourselves in Bed long awake. In Dressing yourself, you may reflect upon the true End of Clothing: which was, to preserve Modesty and Health, to distinguish Quality and Sex; which will be useful to guard you from Vanity and Pride. And in all those Actions that relate to Dressing, let no Lightness or Immodesty ever appear: Remember to reverence yourself.

II. MORNING PRAYER. You must be sure never to omit your Morning Devotions; however pressing and urgent your Business may be. I will suggest to you the Method of it, in that Part of this Treatise which relates to the *Means of Religion*. We cannot reasonably expect the Blessing of God upon our temporal Affairs, if we do not beg it of him with entire Submission to his Will and Pleasure; neither can our spiritual Affairs succeed, without the Assistance and Direction of his Grace, which we must always implore by fervent and diligent Prayer. When we are retired from our Devotions, we should entertain ourselves with reading some Portion of the holy Scriptures; and besides, if we feed our Minds with perusing some good Book, though for a Quarter of an Hour, we shall receive great Profit and Advantage from it; the Subject will be apt to occur to our  
Thoughts

Thoughts in those Minutes of the Day when we are most at Leisure, especially if we have digested what we read by serious Meditation. It will be also very proper to consider with thyself, what Opportunities may present of serving God that Day, and what Temptations may offer to offend him; that you may be prepared, by a fixed Resolution, to embrace the one, and to avoid and shun the other. They who govern a Family, must charge themselves with it as their Duty, to call them together every Morning to worship God. They are answerable for the Souls of those that are under their Care, either Children or Servants: And this Practice is the best Method to make them dutiful and obedient, and serviceable in their different Stations.

III. PUBLIC PRAYER. Those whom the Providence of God has intrusted with a great Command of their Time, cannot better employ it, than by attending daily the Service of the Church, so admirably contrived to nourish the Devotion of all her Children; and indeed the Nature of their Circumstances seems to require it from them. And there are very few much involved in worldly Affairs, but spend more Time than that requires in Diversion or vain Amusements; so that if the Men of Business were as intent upon working out their Salvation as they are upon

heaping up Riches, and growing Great, they would certainly so contrive their Affairs, as frequently to dedicate half an Hour in four and twenty, to the public Service of God. A Mind thoroughly warmed with the Love of God, need not be pressed to this Duty; it is the Delight of such to *dwell in his Courts, to be thankful unto him, and to speak of his good Name.*

**IV. BUSINESS, or our Calling.** Take Care to discharge all the particular Duties of that Estate and Condition wherein the Providence of God has placed you, with Justice and Industry, and wisely to manage your Time, of which you must one Day give a strict Account.

If you are under the Necessity of working for your Living, bless God that he has by this Means secured you from Idleness, the Root of all Evil: And of what Nature soever your Employment is, exercise it with Justice and Fidelity. If a plentiful Fortune has set you above any Calling, remember it is your Business to manage your Estate to the best Advantage; to govern your Family with Prudence and Piety; to administer Justice in your Country diligently and impartially; and to attend to the public Affairs of the Nation: with a firm Resolution, in all your Proceedings, to aim at the Good and Welfare of the Church and State. You must  
not

not consume your Time in impertinent Visits, and in trifling Conversations, and in continual Diversions, or in unaccountable Sloth; for Mirth and doing Nothing was never designed for the Business of Life. Unhappy is that Man whose whole Employment is Gaming and Debauchery, and studies only for some new Diversion.

In whatever Condition you are, some Employment may be found out, useful either to yourself or your Neighbour. And in the Labour either of Body or Mind, prescribe to yourself a Distribution of your Time, for every Thing you have to do every Day; and observe exactly the Regulation you have pitched upon: By this Means Time will never lie upon your Hands, and you will be delivered from many Temptations of offending God.

Before you begin your Work, or any other of your Actions, offer them to God, if you design they should be acceptable to him. *O my God! it is to comply with the Order of thy Providence, and to obey thy holy Will, that I engage in my worldly Affairs; make them serviceable to my Subsistence and thy Glory, and to the Salvation of my own Soul.* During your Work, frequently raise up your Mind to God, to renew the Intention you have of pleasing him; and take Care that Vanity and Curiosity, and Self-love, or a Regard to Men only, or some other evil Intention, does not

slide in to corrupt your Actions. Do not think, that by this I lay too great a Burden upon you; for a short Ejaculation is quickly made, and a little Reflection upon the Virtue I shall afterwards recommend to your daily Meditation. What Pity is it to see how some Men consume themselves by the Labour of their Bodies and Minds, who endure a great deal, and yet, when all is done, it no Way contributes to the Advancement of their great Interest, their eternal Salvation? Now whence does all this proceed, but either from the Defect of their Intention, having no Thought of pleasing God; or else from a bad Intention, aiming at Vanity and Self-love in all their Actions; both which may be remedied, by offering up all our Actions to God before we begin them, and in each of them to aim at his Honour and Glory.

In all your Actions equally avoid two dangerous Extremes, *Negligence* and *Over-eagerness*. Every Thing we do, should be done to the utmost of our Ability and Capacity; God and Men expect this from us.

Never suffer yourself to be oppress'd by the Multitude of Affairs; and though Diligence is necessary and commendable, yet too great Concern and Eagerness must be avoided. When you grasp at too much at a Time, the Mind is distracted, and entirely dissipated, or is fixed so strongly upon what you are about, that you have no Leisure, even for a Moment,

to

to raise up your Mind to God: Besides, if one undertakes too much, one cannot perform it as one ought, and with the Success that is required; which creates Trouble and Uneasiness.

In all bodily Labour, avoid all provoking, angry, or impatient Words, which Weariness and Painfulness, that proceed from Working are apt to incline Men to. As to this Respect, be upon your Guard, for what can be greater Folly, than to vent ourselves upon animate or inanimate Things, when our Work does not succeed as we desire.

If your Employment confines you to the more agreeable Labour of the Mind, shun Negligence and Curiosity; propose not Vanity as the End of your Studies, and never read Books that may endanger the Purity of your Mind, or shake the Firmness of your pious Resolutions. It is much better to know less, than to deface the Beauty of your Morals by such Studies as may be apt to corrupt them.

If the Management of a Family is made your Province, be sure not to neglect it. How many Men and Women pass their Time in Gaming, Visits, and Diversions, without concerning themselves in the least with their Children or Servants. If these perish everlastingly through your Neglect, and for want of that Christian Education and Care which you

owe them; how great will be your Condemnation at the Day of Judgment?

V. MEALS. Let the Times of your necessary eating be constantly regulated; and never so far sacrifice to your Appetite, as to be guilty of an Excess. By this Means God's good Creatures will not be abused, and your own Health will be preserved firm and vigorous, which suffers very much when Nature is frequently overloaded.

Never sit down to the Table, till you have begged God's Blessing upon those good Creatures provided for your Use; since it is by the *Word of God and Prayer* that they are sanctified to us. And as soon as you rise from the Table, thankfully acknowledge the Refreshment you have received. The Principles of natural Religion teach us Gratitude; and this particular Instance of it, has sufficient Ground from the Example of Christ and his holy Apostles; all the Evangelists declaring, that our Saviour *Blessed and gave Thanks before Meat*. And St. Paul speaks of it as the known Practice of the Christians in his Day, *Rom. xiv*. And if you happen to be at a Table where this Christian Practice is neglected, reprove by your Example, and silently perform what the Master of the Family ought to have discharged after a public Manner.

Good Cheer naturally inclines us to Mirth  
and

and Freedom, which we must take Care to make Innocent. Any Discourse that borders upon Immodesty, any Raillery that wounds our Neighbour, is exceeding the Bounds of our Christian Liberty.

Let no Complaisance prevail upon you to transgress the Rules of Temperance: they must never be esteemed your Friends, that press you to go beyond the Bounds of Christian Measures; and the Example of no Man, be his Quality never so great, should prevail upon you to make yourself a Beast. Never propose those for your Pattern, whose Minds are set upon delicate Dishes, and generous Liquors; whose chief Study is to provide for their Appetites; who are always complaining, and finding Fault with every Thing they eat and drink; and who place their chief Happiness in sensual Enjoyments.

**VI: CONVERSATION and DIVERSION.** Care should be taken in the Choice of the Company we frequent; because if their Example be bad, it may by Degrees corrupt our Virtue, at least it may be apt to abate the Horror for Vice we ought to have, when we see it frequently committed by those we love. It is much better being alone, than venturing ourselves in the Society of Sinners: Our Security from the Infection of their Follies, consists in keeping at a Distance from their Conversation. No general Rule, to judge of Men by, holds with greater Certainty than the Company

pany they keep, which, for the most Part, is like themselves, or in Time will make them such.

If by Accident you fall into the Conversation of Libertines and Evil-speakers, never be so complaisant and faint-hearted as to comply with the Liberties they take, or to support a Discourse which contradicts the Maxims of the Gospel, if you can possibly interrupt them, or with Address turn the Conversation to some other Subject: But if these Attempts prove to no Purpose, let the Concern of your Countenance, your Silence, or the Coldness of your Answers, testify your Dislike of such Entertainment. Never conform yourself to such supple Gentlemen, who, like Apes, do every Thing they see others do; who do not make their Duty the Rule of their Actions, but the Example of others. No Pretence of Friendship, good Company, or Diversion, should make us forget the Rule we ought to walk by.

Never pretend to divert the Company at the Expence of *Modesty* or *Charity*: Such Sallies of Wit must be restrained, which reflect upon the Infirmities and Faults of our Neighbours, and betray the Corruption of our own Minds. Keep a particular Watch upon yourself in respect to *Detraction*, *Slander*, and *Evil-speaking*, the Bane of Conversation, and a Vice so common at present, that even many strict Professors of Religion, in other Things, are not altogether free from Guilt in this Matter.

Care.

Carefully avoid two Extremes, which are apt to make Conversation criminal, *Melancholy*, and *too great Mirth*. The first, whether it proceeds from ill Humour, or from any Thing that troubles us, inclines us to Passion and provoking Words: In this Temper we can bear nothing, nor be pleased with any Thing others do or say. The other, which proceeds from a gay, facetious Temper, puts us upon too free, light, and immodest Words and Actions; makes us rally too much, talk too much, and exposes us to many other Imperfections.

Never give Way to *Transports of Passion*, under any Pretence whatsoever: Offer your Reasons with Strength and Mildness: and if they are not relished, never trouble yourself upon that Account, because by an indecent Warmth you get no Ground; so though you could this Way push your Reasons farther, yet you ought not to do it at the Expence of Peace and Charity, which is much preferable to any Thing else. If you are provoked by sly Reflections, or any biting Raillery, let Modesty and Silence serve instead of an Answer: Do not fear that your Silence should be interpreted to your Disadvantage; for since it appeared you did not want Words to advance your Reasons, it will never be imagined you could not return the injurious Raillery you receive: And whereas the Dispute is now no farther Reasoning but Quarrelling:

relling, it much more raises your Character to turn a deaf Ear to any provoking Reflections, than by returning them in their Kind, of which there is no End, and which serve only to scandalize your Neighbour, and disturb the Company.

It is not sufficient to be innocent in Conversation, by avoiding such Faults to which it is most exposed; but we must endeavour to make it *useful* and *advantageous* to one another. When any Accidents of Life are related, we should draw such Inferences from them, as may instruct as well as divert: We should contrive it so, that Religion may have a Share in our Entertainments, but without Affectation, or bringing it in unseasonably. It is surprising that Christians, whose main Business is the Care of their Souls, should be so ready and eloquent to speak upon any Subject that relates to this World, and yet so cold and indifferent when the Matters of God and Eternity are started. Religious Discourse in its Season is very profitable, and proves an admirable Incitement to Piety in those that speak, and those that hear.

Among the several Objects that present themselves to you in Conversation, be sure to have a Guard upon your Senses; restrain your Eyes from any immodest Glances, that they may not be fixed on dangerous Objects. Several complain that their Minds

are dissipated and distracted, and that they are attacked by many Temptations; but this is not to be wondered at, because they draw these Temptations upon themselves, by loose Conversations with Persons of a different Sex; by unguarded Looks, by libertine Discourses, and by dangerous Diversions, which prove the very Temptations they complain of.

In *Diversions* we must consider the *End* and *Design* of them, which is, to refresh our wearied Spirits, to unbend ourselves from the constant Application to Business, and thereby to fit and prepare us the better to discharge our Duties in our several Stations. Whatever contradicts this End, must be avoided: for we were not sent into Life only to sport, and please ourselves; and Diversion ceases to be so, when it is made our Business. We must also have a Regard to the Nature of them, that they be such as tend to promote our Health, and at the same Time no Ways impair the Vigour of our Minds; that they do not expose us to any dangerous Temptations; and become the Occasion of offending God: Those Pleasures that are unlawful, are not so much as to be named among Christians; and those that are lawful, must be used with Moderation, and at seasonable Hours, and such chose as most comport with the Gravity of our Christian Profession,

Gaming

Gaming has been the Source of many and great Mischiefs, and has ruined many Persons in their Bodies and Souls; and in this Age, it destroys its Thousands and ten Thousands; especially when Men apply themselves to it as a Trade, and propose Gain rather than Diversion from it. Extravagance usually attends it, as does Passion, Swearing, Cheating and Lying; and very often Conscience, Time and Estate, are sacrificed to it altogether. Sober Persons, that divert themselves this Way, must take Care that it does not consume too much of their precious Time, and that it never intrenches upon the necessary Duties of the Family and Closet; that they never hazard more than they can conveniently spare; and that they never venture to win of others, what should support them and their Families; that their Minds are not agitated by various Passions, which endanger their Virtue; and that they avoid all Disputes or Quarrels, which exasperate People's Minds one against another; and above all, that they do not make a Business of what they should use only as a Diversion.

VII. READING. Food is not more necessary to our Bodies, than Reading the Holy Scriptures and spiritual Books is for the Nourishment of our Souls. It is unaccountable to see how many Men amuse themselves with Trifles for Hours together, and how few find

find Leisure to peruse practical Treatises of Religion. As bad Books are very pernicious, so good ones are very useful and profitable; they enlighten our Understandings, and teach us the Practice of Piety and Holiness; they stir up our Wills and inflame our Affections, and make us readily choose and pursue the Service of God; they are Preachers ready at hand, that we may consult with when we have a Mind to do it.

It is better to read a little with Attention, than to read a great deal and be never the better for it. Let not Curiosity, and a Thirst of Knowledge only, be the Motive of your reading; but let your chief Aim be, to become thereby more holy and sanctified. Sometimes in reading, raise up your Mind to God, and beg his Grace to make it profitable to you; dwell a little upon any Passage that sensibly affects you, and consider of the best Means whereby you may put in Practice what you have read.

Never suffer bad Books to be your Entertainment; such as undermine the Principles of the Christian Religion, or corrupt the Purity of Morality, by putting fair Colours upon the worst of Crimes, by stirring up our Passions to forbidden Objects, and by filling our Heads with romantic Notions of Love and Honour. Never pretend, that in such Discourses you may pick out the good, and leave the bad; the reading of one Side will  
insensibly

insensibly draw you on to another, and those Trifles will so fix themselves in your Imagination, that when you would get rid of them, you will not be able: Besides they who give themselves up to the reading of Romances and amorous Poetry, which generally insinuate the greatest Concupiscence under the Notion of Love, are frequently so bewitched by them, that it takes up a great deal of their Time, and no Arguments can prevail upon them to quit such an unjustifiable Practice.

VIII. EXAMINATION. Never go to Bed before you have called yourself to an Account for all the Actions of the past Day; nothing will contribute to your spiritual Advancement more, than this Method seriously and impartially performed. The Seeds of Vice will hereby be hindered from taking any deep Root in your Heart, and evil Habits will never be able to prevail upon you, or to strengthen and fortify themselves. Recollect as much as you can the Thoughts, Words and Actions, that have entertained you the Day past, whether you have not had vain, unclean or revengeful *Thoughts*? Whether you have neglected to resist them? Whether you have voluntarily indulged them; or whether you have consented to them?

As to your *Words*: Whether you have been guilty of Evil-speaking, of passionate and angry Expressions, of any Falshood in imposing

posing upon others, of any immodest or provoking Speeches? Profane Cursing and Swearing, are never practised by Christians that take any Care of their Lives.

As to your *Actions*: Whether you offered your first Thoughts to God when you awaked? Whether you performed the Duties of the Closet and Family, and with what Attention and Fervour of Mind? Whether you attended the Church Prayers, if you had the Command of Time? Whether you have been diligent and just in your Calling? Whether you have offered your ordinary Actions to God, with a Design to please him? Whether, during your Business, you have had short Aspirations towards Heaven? Whether you have said Grace before and after your Meals? And whether Modesty and Temperance has always accompanied them? Whether, in conversing you have avoided Vanity, Detraction and Pride? and whether you have taken Care to govern your Passions, and endeavour to make your Discourse useful and profitable? Whether your Diversions have been moderate? Whether they have been the Occasion of your offending God? If you have received any particular Mercies, Whether you have been thankful? If you have had Leisure, how you have employed your Time? Whether in doing Good to others or improving yourself, by reading practical Books of Religion? Now thus by recollecting the whole

whole Time; and the Manner of spending it, from our rising till our going to Bed, to which Purpose, a very few Minutes before our Evening Devotions will suffice, we shall very easily be enabled to answer the preceding Questions; so that we may heartily beg God's Pardon for those Sins we have been guilty of, take firm Resolutions of avoiding them for the Time to come, and shew ourselves thankful for those Blessings he has bestowed upon us.

**IX. EVENING PRAYER.** After you have called yourself to an Account, and have examined yourself, it will be proper to offer up your Evening Sacrifice of Prayer and Praise. Be sure never to go into your Bed till you have reconciled yourself to God by hearty Repentance, and expressed your Sorrow if you have offended Him; till you have implored the Continuance of his Grace, and have recommended yourself to his divine Protection. This is your best Security against the Perils and Dangers of the Night; and who can tell, whether you shall awake again in this World! The same Reasons that prevailed upon you to call your Family together to worship God in the Morning, are equally as strong for the performing it in the Evening; nay, the Conveniency of doing it seems to be greater; for then the Family is not so much dispersed, and they

they cannot pretend at that Time any Buſi-  
neſs for their not attending. Some Helps  
to Family and Cloſet Devotion ſhall be  
annexed under the Head of the *Means of  
Religion*.

X. GOING TO SLEEP. As God was firſt,  
ſo let Him be the laſt in your Thoughts,  
when you compoſe yourſelf to reſt. To this  
End, the *Evening Hymn* I recommend to the  
Charge of your Memory, will be of admira-  
ble Uſe; for when our Spirits are drowſy,  
they are not ſo fit for Invention, but we ſhall  
easily run over what lies ready in our Memo-  
ries. If you awake in the Night, the Dark-  
neſs and Solitude of it ſhould diſpoſe you to  
Seriouſneſs, and then it will be proper to  
repeat the *Midnight Hymn*; which will have  
this good Effect, at leaſt, that it will prevent  
trifling, looſe and impertinent Thoughts from  
crowding in upon you, and deliver many from  
 thoſe terrifying Imaginations which are apt to  
ſeize them, when they ſuffer their Minds to  
rove upon all poſſible Dangers.

XI. SUNDAYS, and other FESTIVAL DAYS.  
The Lord's Day is obſerved among Chriſtians  
in Memory of our Saviour's Reſurrection;  
and we ſhould diſtinguiſh it by our Devo-  
tions, as much as it is by the Bleſſings we  
commemorate: You muſt be ſure to keep it  
holy, by abſtaining from the Works of your  
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ordinary Calling; which become criminal, when God challenges the seventh Part of your Time for his immediate Service: by not allowing yourself in any worldly Affair of Recreation, which may hinder your Attendance upon the Worship of God, or defeat those ends for which the Day was set apart for common Uses.

You must not think it enough, not to profane it by common Uses, but your Time must be employed in all such religious Exercises as tend to the Glory of God, and the Salvation of your own Soul. You must never omit frequenting the public Places of God's Worship upon this Day; nothing but Sickness or absolute Necessity should excuse you; for this was one End of its Appointment, that we might openly profess ourselves Christians; and all agree that *Sunday* is profaned by the Neglect of it.

When you are present in the Church you must take Care to behave yourself with all outward Decency, and to conform yourself to the Rules of the Church; by standing, sitting, and kneeling, as is enjoined; and you must use all these different Postures with such Gravity and Seriousness, as may demonstrate how intent you are when engaged in God's peculiar Service, and yet without such Affectations and Particularities as are apt to disturb those that are near you, and may give Occasion to others to suspect you as acting a formal,

formal, hypocritical Part. You must endeavour to be at Church before the Service begins; and after your private Devotions, keep yourself in silent Meditation, that your Mind may be the better disposed for the ensuing Duties: and never suffer yourself to talk with others till the Minister begins, either upon News or Business, which may distract you: to avoid observing the Rules of Ceremony, in bowing to others, when Prayers are begun. In God's presence, your Attention should be so fixt, that you should not have Leisure to mind any Thing else.

You must have a particular Regard to the Posture of your Mind, that you join fervently in the Prayers of the Church; that you hear God's holy Word, and those Instructions from the Pulpit with Reverence and Attention, and with a Resolution to practise what you shall be convinced to be your Duty; that you offer your Charity, if there be any Collection, in Compliance with the Precepts that enjoin it, and with an Acknowledgment of God's Right to all you enjoy: And above all, that you receive the blessed Sacrament with great Humility and Devotion.

Take Care you do not turn your Back upon the Holy Table, when the Heavenly Banquet is prepared. I cannot understand how you can keep the Lord's Day as you ought, if you refuse any Opportunity that is  
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then offered you of Communion with him, in the most solemn Act of his public Worship. If thou endeavourest to live like a good Christian, thou art certainly well prepared, and will find a gracious Reception from thy compassionate Saviour: But if thou refusest to come, when thou art called with so much earnest Kindness, thou neglectest thy own true Interest, and omittest an easy Testimony of thy Gratitude and Thankfulness.

In private upon this Day you should enlarge your ordinary Devotions, and should make the Subject of them chiefly to consist in Thanksgivings for the Works of Creation and Redemption; withal recollecting the particular Mercies you have received from the Bounty of God, through the whole Course of your Life. You should improve your Knowledge, by Reading and Meditating upon divine Subjects: you should instruct your Children and Servants in the great Duties of Christianity; you should visit the Sick and Needy, and administer to them Comfort and Relief: And if you converse with your Friends or Neighbours, season your Discourse with prudent and profitable Hints for the Advancement of Piety. Let your serious Frame of Mind be free from all Sourness and Moroseness.

If you commemorate any of the Mysteries of our Redemption, as the *Incarnation*, *Crucifixion*,

*cifixion, Resurrection, or Ascension* of our Saviour Jesus Christ, confirm your Belief of them, by considering all those Reasons upon which they are built, that you may be able to give a good Account of the Hope that is in you, and resolve to practise all those Duties that result from the Belief of them. Offer up your Praises and Thanksgivings to God, that he vouchsafed to consider your miserable and forlorn Condition; and that he was pleased to work your Recovery in such a wonderful Manner.

When the Church sets the Example of any Saint before you, consider the Virtues he was most eminent for, and celebrate his Memory by the Imitation of his Piety.

**XII. FASTING DAYS.** Most of the Mischiefs that happen to us in Life, are occasioned by our ungovernable Appetites; and the indulging of them by our first Parents brought Death into the World; so that we should use Fasting and Abstinence, as a Means to keep them under Subjection and Government, and as a Remedy against those Evils which the satisfying of them to the full often expose us to. Our Saviour joins this Duty with Almsgiving and Prayer; and the Directions he has given in his admirable Sermon upon the Mount, concerning the Performance of it, supposes the Necessity of the Duty. It was all along observed by  
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devout Men, and acceptable to God under the Old and New Testament, both as it was helpful to their Devotion, and as it became a Part of it.

Sometimes, when your Health will permit, abstain from Eating and Drinking till the Evening, and then refresh yourself sparingly as to the Quantity, and plainly as to the Quality of your Food. At other Times upon those Days when you do not avoid your ordinary Meals, abstain from Variety, and from what is most nourishing and delicate, and what gratifies your Palate most, that you may by Degrees get the Mastery of you sensual Appetites; this Discipline is consistent with the Works of your Calling, and you may thereby have more Leisure for spiritual Exercises.

Upon your *Fasting Days*, be sure to enlarge your Devotions; reflect particularly upon the State of your Soul; bewail your Sins, and earnestly beg God's Pardon: Contrive, if possible, to do some little Charity at those Times, which is the best Method to make your Humiliation acceptable to God.

If private Fasts, keep the Knowledge of them from others as much as you can, that you may not *appear unto Men to fast*. Be careful not to censure others that do not tie themselves up to such Rules; do not value yourselves upon such bodily Exercises, nor think they will make amends for the Neglect  
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of more substantial Duties; these Things ought you to do, but not to leave greater undone: Above all, at such Times guard yourself against Moroseness, Peevishness, or Fretfulness; which Fasting inclines some People to.

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## CHAP. II.

*That Christian Perfection consists in the right Performance of such Actions as ordinarily occur every Day.*

HAVING in the former Chapter given Rules in relation to such Actions as daily occur in the Course of our Lives, in order to persuade Christians to a careful Performance of them, according to the Measures there laid down; I will now endeavour to convince them that true *Christian Perfection* consists in an exact Discharge of such Duties; and consequently, that their eternal Happiness, or eternal Misery, will be determined by them.

If *Christian Perfection* was only to be attained by Retirement and Contemplation, by abstracting ourselves from the World, and by giving up ourselves entirely to Meditation and spiritual Exercises, considering the Ne-  
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cessities of Life, in order to the Support of it, and the Capacities of the Generality of Men, how few, alas! how very few were qualified ever to arrive at so noble and worthy an End? Men might excuse themselves from this Duty by the Necessity they are under of getting their Living by the Sweat of their Brows, and by their Inability to employ themselves in such Spiritual Exercises: The providence of God would seem thus to exclude those from being perfect, whom his Precepts had enjoined to enter in at the straight Gate. Therefore we may be sure, that the infinite Wisdom and Goodness of God, would never make that Method the only Means of performing our Duty, which was out of the Reach of our Capacities; his Precept is addressed to Men of all States and Conditions, to be perfect, *as their heavenly Father is perfect.* And his Commandment is *not hidden from thee, or afar off: It is not in Heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to Heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the Sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the Sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy Mouth, and in thy Heart, that thou mayst do it.*

Religion was never designed only to serve upon extraordinary Occasions, to adorn the  
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great Solemnities of God's public Worship; but was given us as the best Rule for the Conduct and Government of our whole Lives; and Christians are not obliged so much to distinguish themselves by their Wisdom and Sagacity, as by Uprightness and Holiness in all their Conversation. It supposes us Men engaged in Society, obliged to carry on the Affairs of this Life; but in such a Manner, that they may promote and advance the important Business of our eternal Salvation; so that as the Practice of it is consistent with Trade and Conversation, with Business and Diversion; so it ought to mix with all these ordinary Actions of Life; nay, its proper Sphere seems to be, to govern them after such a Manner, that while we pass through Things temporal, we may not lose those which are eternal; for *what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do Justice, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

When we call ourselves to an Account of our Actions, our Design is to examine whether, in those that every Day occur, we have followed the Design of God's Providence in our several Stations, and whether we have performed them in such a Manner as his Laws direct: and the Guilt we contract in either engaging in such as are forbidden, or in performing those that are lawful and necessary in an undue Manner.

The Difference between the Goodness of one Man and another, does not so much depend upon the Nature of that Employment which is made his Profession, as upon that Temper of Mind with which he governs it. The Priest at the Altar may be rejected by God, through his Ambition and Covetousness; when the Tradesman in his Shop may sanctify his Business by Justice and Charity.

Indeed, it is the peculiar Honour and Happiness of an Order of Men, to approach nearer to God, by the constant Study and Application of their Minds, as well as by the Dedication of their Persons to his immediate Service; but this can be the Lot and Province of few; we cannot all be teachers, and we ought thankfully to acknowledge the great Goodness of God, that he has set apart some on Purpose, whose only Business it is to guide and direct Men in the Way to everlasting Salvation; while others are obliged to drudge on in the common and necessary Employments of Life. But still this ought to be remembered, that the Layman, in his Profession, is equally capable of working out his Salvation, with the Clergyman that is ordained in Things pertaining to God. For as one may miscarry in his holy Function, by engaging in it from wrong Motives and worldly Designs; by neglecting that great Trust that is committed to his Care; or by performing it without Diligence and Zeal;  
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by making it only a Means of enriching himself and Family, and providing for his more pleasurable and luxurious Living; to the other, by making himself an Instrument of Providence in carrying on the Affairs of the World; by exercising Justice and Equity in all his Dealings; by relieving the Poor and Neceffitous; and both from a Principle of Conscience; by governing his Family after a Christian Manner; by diverting himself moderately, for Refreshment only; by eating and drinking with Temperance and Sobriety; by doing all the Good that lies in his Reach; and by praying and praising God at certain stated Hours: and by conversing with Him by devout Ejaculations frequently in the Midst of Business: I say, by this Means, the Man of Business may make his Calling and Election sure. Nay, the very State of Slavery and Servitude, the most compassionate and miserable Circumstance of Life, is no Bar or Obstacle to the attaining the incorruptible Inheritance; provided that, according to St. Paul's Direction, they are *obedient to their Masters according to the Flesh, with Fear and Trembling, in Singleness of Heart, as unto Christ; not with Eye-service, as Men-pleasers, but as the Servants of Christ, doing the Will of God from the Heart.*

Now the Goodness and Perfection of our ordinary Actions depend upon two Things:

The First is, That in the general we *aim at the Glory of God*, according to the Apostle's Rule, *That whatsoever we do, we may do all to the Glory of God.* The Second is, That we do our utmost Endeavour to perform it well. *Whatsoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ; for there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom in the Grace, whither thou goest.*

John the Baptist seems to countenance this Notion of *Christian Perfection*, in his Answer to those in the Gospel, who, coming to be baptized, desired to know of him, what they might do to avoid the wrath to come? To the *People* in general, he prescribes an extensive Charity to those that wanted what they could spare; Luke iii. 11. *He that hath two Coats let him impart to Him that hath none; and he that hath Meat, let him do likewise.*

To the *Publicans*, he gives in Charge not to exact more than that which is appointed; their Office being to collect the Tribute Money, the Temptation they lay under, was to exact more than they ought.

To the *Soldier*, he gives in Charge, that they do violence to no Man, neither accuse any falsely; which Word in the original signifies not only to accuse falsely, but to circumvent and oppress; and to be content with their Wages. Now all these Exhortations of the Baptist press Men to excel in the Duties of their Profession, and seem to take their  
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Perfection to consist in the Performance of those Duties that ordinarily occurred to them. He gives them such Directions only, as related to a faithful Discharge of their Duty in their several Stations and Callings.

These Rules should make us consider the Nature of our Employments, whether we can with Assurance, and a good Conscience, offer them up to God; and whether we have that Regard to the Manner of performing them, as that they may be able to bear the Test of a future Judgment; for when once we are laid in the Grave, no Faults are to be rectified: As the Tree falls, so it lies; as Death receives us, so Judgment will find us. Let us therefore choose such Callings as we shall approve of in a dying Hour, and prosecute them with such Diligence and Industry, with such Justice and Equity, that they may stand fair in the Accounts of Eternity. Let us pray, and perform all the Offices of Devotion with Fervency and Constancy. Let us converse with others courteously and charitably, and by our Discourse edify to the utmost of our Capacity. Let the Refreshments of Life be always attended with Temperance, and our Diversions with Innocency and Moderation: And let us remember in our vacant Minutes, to send up devout Aspirations towards our heavenly Country; which ought always to be kept in View, since our safe

Arrival there is the great Concernment of Life.

I shall conclude this Chapter, by offering two Rules, whereby you may be enabled to perform the ordinary Actions of your Life which occur every Day, after the best and most perfect Manner.

The *first* I shall give you in this Matter, is ~~to keep a lively Sense of God's Omnipresence upon your Minds~~; always to remember, that he sees all your Ways, and is privy to all your Thoughts, and that nothing is hid from his all-seeing Eye. The Philosopher could propose to us, as a Means of Virtue, to imagine some Person of great Merit, and for whom we have a profound Respect, always before us; and to accustom ourselves to speak and act in such a Manner, as that we might procure his Approbation. If such an imaginary Scheme was capable of producing any good Effect, what Influence must the Presence of an infinite, wise, and holy God have upon us? which is a real Truth, clear from the Notion we have of the Divine Nature, and the plain Declarations of Scripture.

Now this Regard to the Omnipresence of God, which I recommend to you, does not imply the actual Application of our Minds to God, as present before us; but only so to order all our Actions, both as to the Nature and Manner of performing them, that they  
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ing, and with the Way and Manner of practising it; and to put you upon a peculiar Care of exercising each Day the particular Virtue that is recommended.

But in order that you may receive greater Profit and Advantage from what I shall suggest to you, I desire that you would with me make some Reflections upon the Christian Virtues in general.

*First*, Let us consider the *Necessity of them*. All the Means of Religion are useful in their Kind, and acceptable to God when performed with a right Intention, and after a due Manner. Our Prayers and our Sacraments, our hearing Sermons, and all other Exercises of Piety, more or less advance our Christian Perfection, as they tend to recover the Image of God in our Souls, and to work in us all Christian Virtues; this being the Rule and Measure of our Christian Perfection: so that it is not he that says the most Prayers, and comes the most frequently to the Altar, that is the most holy and sanctified Person; but he that is most like to God, and abounds most with the Fruits of the Spirit. An evident Proof of this, is our own Experience: How few Persons do we see that are solidly and substantially good; yet how many frequent the duties of divine Worship, and are up to a Rule and Form of their own Church! The Temper of their Hearts

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PRACTICE OF TRUE DEVOTION,

IN RELATION TO THE

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*RELIGION.*

CHAP. III.

*Some Considerations in Relation to the Practice of Christian Virtues, which is the*

END OF RELIGION.

BE not surpris'd that I recommend to you but one particular Virtue for every Day in the Week. It is certain we ought daily to practise all Virtues, according to those Opportunities and Circumstances which the Providence of God presents to us for the Exercise of them: But my Design in this Method is, to make you acquainted, by Degrees, thoroughly with each considerable Christian Virtue,

tue, and with the Way and Manner of practising it; and to put you upon a peculiar Care of exercising each Day the particular Virtue that is recommended.

But in order that you may receive greater Profit and Advantage from what I shall suggest to you, I desire that you would with me make some Reflections upon the Christian Virtues in general.

*First*, Let us consider the *Necessity of them*. All the Means of Religion are useful in their Kind, and acceptable to God when performed with a right Intention, and after a due Manner. Our Prayers and our Sacraments, our hearing Sermons, and all other Exercises of Piety, more or less advance our Christian Perfection, as they tend to recover the Image of God in our Souls, and to work in us all Christian Virtues; this being the Rule and Measure of our Christian Perfection: so that it is not he that says the most Prayers, and comes the most frequently to the Altar, that is the most holy and sanctified Person; but he that is most like to God, and abounds most with the Fruits of the Spirit. An evident Proof of this, is our own Experience: How few Persons do we meet with that are solidly and substantially good; and yet how many frequent the public Solemnities of divine Worship, and tie themselves up to a Rite and Form of Devotion in their own Closets! The Temper of our Minds must be changed, our  
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Hearts renewed, our inward Affections purified and sanctified, in order to make our outward Actions pleasing in God's Sight. Our Prayers and Devotions, and all outward Exercises of Piety must be offered with ardent Love, and profound Humility, and with all those other noble Virtues which give a Value to our most inconsiderable Actions, and are the likeliest Means we can use to conduct us to Christian Perfection. Let us therefore immediately set about this necessary Work of improving in solid Virtue, and endeavour every Day to make some Progress in it.

Is it not a Shame that you have made such small Advances in this important Business, after so many Prayers and Examinations, after so many Confessions and Sacraments, after having heard so many Sermons, and after having read so many spiritual Books; after so many Examples and Means that have been used to make you perfect? Alas! may not I say, after thirty or forty Years employed in all these Exercises, you have not yet thoroughly learned that one Point of Humility. You are so sensible of Honour and Reputation, that the least injurious Reflection, a little inconsiderable Contempt, a small Disappointment, is capable of putting you into a Flame, of making you break out into violent Passion and injurious Works, of provoking Murmur and Discontent, sufficient to convince you, that all this while you have made little  
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Proficiency in the School of Christ. The same Observation might be made in reference to the other Virtues of Christianity; but I pass over a large Induction of Particulars, to come to farther Considerations of Christian Virtues in general.

*Secondly*, Let us consider their *dependance upon one another*. All Christian Virtues have so great a Connection one with another, that it is impossible to be Master of one in Perfection, without possessing at the same Time several others. I have proposed to you only the Practice of seven Virtues; but as they are the most important, so it is not to be doubted, but that if you attain them in any considerable Degree, you can be no Stranger to the other Parts of your Duty. I satisfy myself in proposing this small Number to you, that I may not distract you by a great Multitude, and that I may make you distinguish those which are the principal ones; to the End, that you may never be deceived, as some are, who, instead of applying themselves to the Study of ~~some~~ solid and important Virtue, ~~stop~~ always at such as are less considerable, and by Consequence never arrive at the Perfection of those that are most substantial.

*Thirdly*, Let us consider *those Methods which are properest for attaining any Virtue*, that so we may not be at a Loss in employing our Endeavours to the best Purpose, and in succeeding in our Attempts.

1. *Do nothing that is contrary to the Virtue you propose to attain.* This is the first Step that must be made to root out the Vice that is contrary to it. For Example; If you propose any Progress in Humility, never entertain yourself with vain Thoughts, never speak in your own Praise and Commendation, never condemn or despise any body, &c. This must be your Rule in respect to other Virtues, carefully to avoid such Acts as are contrary to the said Virtues.

2. *Practise the Acts of that Virtue you intend to acquire.* This Step is so necessary, that without it all the others will signify nothing. It is by Writing, that one learns to write; it is by Painting and Drawing, that one learns to draw and paint; and it is by practising Virtue, that one learns it and grows perfect in it. Ask a Virtue of God never so long, reflect upon it never so seriously, read all the Books that treat of it, and hear the most excellent Preachers that recommend it, set the best Examples of it before your Eyes, and make the firmest Resolutions to attain it; yet if you never really practise it, nor exercise yourself in it, you shall never be Master of it. Set therefore immediately about this Method; for it is in humbling yourself, that you become humble. It is in making frequent Acts of the Love of God, that you become enamoured with him; it is by patient suffering, without repining, that you learn Pati-

Patience; and it is by denying yourself, that you become mortified to the Things of this World. And let me advertise you of one Thing, that the longer you defer to practise any Virtue, the more difficulty and Pain you will find whenever you set about it: When as, on the contrary, the sooner and the oftener you exercise yourself in it, you will, by Experience, find it more easy and delightful.

3. *Meditate upon it, and pray to God for it.* When one has seriously for a long Time meditated upon a Thing, and considered its Necessity, Beauty, and Usefulness, it is easily loved and stuck to. This is common to Virtue, with all other Things that are amiable; if you often dwell upon the Excellency of any Virtue, if you consider its Necessity and Advantage, the Example of Jesus Christ, and the Saints that have practised, you will find it much more easy to exercise, whenever an Opportunity presents itself to that Purpose. Let therefore the solid Virtues I have recommended, be the Subject of your frequent Meditations: For by the vigorous and constant Application of your Minds to them, you will find yourself animated to acquire them. To this we must join our hearty Prayers to God; and in order to be heard, you must ask with such a Faith as consists in firmly believing you shall receive the Thing you desire, when you have performed  
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those Conditions, upon which God has promised to bestow it. You know, Courage is necessary to do Violence to ourselves, and to overcome the Difficulty there is in the Practice of Religion: And it is from God only we can expect this Strength and Assistance, who must often be applied to for the Influences of his holy Spirit, that we may be able to mortify our Passions and abound in every Virtue.

4. *Examine yourself concerning it.* The frequent Reflection that we make in the Examination of our Consciences, is a good Means to advance our Progress in any Virtue. Upon those Occasions you must not only call yourself to an Account for your Sins, but also for your Virtues, to see how you advance in your spiritual State: what Occasions have presented of practising any Virtue, and how you have behaved yourself in relation to them; and this not only in general, but particularly in respect to the Virtue you design to acquire, and is the Subject of the Day's Meditation: In order to this at your Morning Devotions, make a firm Resolution of practising that particular Virtue that Day. If in the Day-time you omit any Occasion that presents for the putting it in Execution, immediately ask God's Pardon, and call upon Jesus for fresh Strength. In the Evening, when you recount the Actions of the whole Day, particularly reflect upon the  
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Progress you have made in the same Virtue; compare the Advance you have that Day made, with the Profit you reaped the Day before; form new Regulations to neglect nothing that may possibly tend to make you perfect in this Virtue.

5. *OVERCOME all those Obstacles and Hindrances which oppose the Practice of this Virtue.* These Objects are either particular or general: The particular ones relate to your natural Temper and Constitution, and take their Rise from your Humour and your Inclinations. It is possible you may be naturally Choleric, now this is an Hindrance to Meekness and Charity: You may be sanguine, and naturally of a soft and gay Temper, given to Pleasure: now this is an Obstacle to Self-denial and Mortification: You are, it may be, of a melancholy Disposition, touchy and positive: now this is an Obstacle to Patience: You are inclined to Complaisance, and to aim at the good Opinion of Men, and to distinguish yourself from others; now this is an Obstacle of Humility. These Hindrances must be pulled up by the Roots, and Nature must be resisted, if we design to cultivate her to Purpose; you must overcome your Humour, do Violence to your Inclinations, if ever you mean to see the Seed of Virtue thrive in your Soul.

Now the general Obstacles which must be conquered, are Cowardice and Inconstancy,  
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Self-love, and amusing ourselves continually with Trifles, and several other Vices, which are Enemies to all Virtues. It is by great Courage and constant Perseverance, that you will overcome all the Difficulties of the World; therefore never be disheartened by the Pains and Labour you may meet with in the Way of Christian Perfection: The Devil may be apt to insinuate to you, that you aim too high, and that it is impossible for you to practise any one Virtue as you ought; but give no Ear to his Suggestions; provided you do but bring your best Endeavours, the Grace of God will always be ready to crown them with Success.

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## CHAP. IV.

FOR SUNDAY.

### *The Love of GOD.*

THE first Exercise I shall recommend to you is, the *Love of God*; a Virtue of the greatest Importance: Of all our Passions, Love is the most agreeable; and of all Beings, God is the only one, that is infinitely perfect, and therefore the only fit and proper Object of it. If we place our Affections  
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pon Creatures, we shall always be liable to Disappointment; they are empty, and cannot satisfy us, and when we think ourselves most secure in the Enjoyment of them, they make themselves Wings and fly away. God only is a solid and durable Good, and He only can fill all the Powers and Capacities of our Souls; therefore we ought to entertain our Minds with such Motives as are proper to kindle his Love in our Hearts. Let us therefore consider,

1. *THE Perfections of GOD.* If some faint strokes of Beauty and Wisdom, in the Persons of those we converse with, are apt to engage our Affection; what Love ought we to have for God, who is infinite in all Excellencies, who has Wisdom without the least imperfection, and Goodness without any Alloy, and whose Perfections infinitely surpass the brightest Footsteps of them in all his creatures? *Who in Heaven or Earth can be compared with our God!*

2. *THE Mercies of GOD.* Benefits are as many Chains which fasten our Hearts, and oblige us to love those that do us Good. What surprising Manifestations have we received of the Love and Good Will of God towards us? The Creating us after his own Image and Likeness, and the Redeeming us by the inexpressible sufferings of his only-begotten Son, the Graces and Assistances of his holy Spirit, the Publication of Pardon  
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and Reconciliation, and the evident Promises of eternal Life, the Means of Grace, his Word and Sacraments; the good Example and Advice of others; our Health and Wealth; in a Word, all the Good we enjoy, or expect. Is it not therefore fit and reasonable to shew your Gratitude for such great Effects of his Goodness, by your best Services? If you could not refuse Him your Heart, when you only considered the Perfections of his Being; is it possible you should deny Him your utmost Affection, all your Soul, when you are made sensible of his infinite Bounty and Kindness towards you?

3. CONSIDER *the Excellency of this Virtue.* It is the great Design of all Religion to inculcate this capital Point; *the End of the Commandment is Charity.* All other Duties center and terminate in this, which is the very Soul, and Life, and Beauty of them. It is the Measure of our Perfections, and gives the true Worth and Value to all our other Actions, without which they cannot be acceptable to God. This raises us above the Creatures, and all their Enjoyments, and unites us to the most perfect Being; without this we are at Enmity with God, and by this Means we are made capable of being his Favourites. Faith lays the Foundation of our Piety, Hope advances it, but Charity, or the Love of God, gives it the finishing Strokes and utmost Perfection.

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The Practice of this great Virtue consists in the following Particulars:

I. *To think of GOD.* It is an undoubted Testimony of our Love to any Person, if we think often of him. Let God therefore be often in your Thoughts, and lift up your Mind to Him: Engage yourself as little in the Hurry and Bustle of Life as may be. Oh; what a Shame is it to think incessantly of a Creature that you love, of any Design you have projected, of an Affair you have undertaken, or of some Diversion you propose, and to pass Hours and whole Days without thinking of God? O love the most amiable Object; frequently on every Day exert Acts of Love towards Him; so that this Flame of divine Love may daily increase in your Hearts.

II. *To speak of GOD.* We take a great deal of Pleasure in making that the Subject of our Discourse, which is the Object of our Affection; *Out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh.* Now upon what Topics does your Conversation usually run? Are they not the Trifles and Vanities of this World, instead of those of your heavenly Country? What is the Meaning that thou art so eloquent and ready to talk, when News or Pleasure is the Subject; so dry and barren, when Religion is started? If you were thoroughly possess'd with the Love of God, your Tongue will give some Proofs of it, and it would

would be the most agreeable Entertainment you could receive from others.

III. To *Aim for GOD*. After you have dedicated to God your Thoughts and your Words, you cannot deny Him the Vigour of your Actions, which ought all to be animated with the Love of him. This should make you consider, how you might please Him most in every Thing you did, and have a greater Regard to Him than to any Thing else. This should make you, in the Beginning of every Action, to dedicate it to God by the Purity of our Intention, in such Words as these: *O my God! I design to please Thee; my Aim is thy Honour and Glory*. The Method would raise our ordinary Actions, and make them more valuable.

IV. To *suffer for GOD*. The Professions of Friendship are easily made to those we love; but nothing tries the Sincerity of them more effectually, than the Obligation of suffering something in their Behalf. If God sends you any Misfortune or Sicknefs, or any other Affliction, be not impatient, but resign yourself to his holy Will and Pleasure: Say to him, *O Lord, since it is thy Will I should suffer, I am contented thy holy Will be done: I could wish, O my God, to suffer yet more for the Love of Thee*. When any ill Accident happens to you, say (not in the Trouble and Bitterness of your Soul) *I must be willing, because God will have it so*. If this is not said with a resigned Will,  
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and a quiet Soul; instead of being an Act of Conformity to the Will of God, it will prove an Act of Impatience: Remember always in your Afflictions, that there is a Providence that governs all Things, and that it is our own Fault if we do not bring Good out of the Evil that happens to us. Let this then be the Language of your Soul: *It is true, O God, that this Cup is bitter, and this Affliction touches me to the Quick; but because it is thy Pleasure to afflict me thus, I am entirely satisfied; and I am willing to suffer, because it is thy Will.*

V. To love what God loves. Those who are most eminent for Piety and Virtue, are his greatest Favourites: therefore let no outward disadvantageous Circumstances hinder you from having the same Inclinations. What God loves and desires is, that we should in all things conform ourselves to his holy Will and Pleasure; and in this consists our Perfection: Let not therefore your own Passions or Interest be the Center of your Actions; consult God's Pleasure, and let that govern you; attend to what He requires from you, and perform it vigorously. It would be Cruelty to a Friend, to do the Thing in the World that most displeases him. Now the Object of God's Hatred and Aversion, is Sin; fly therefore from all Evil, even the Appearance of it; and if you at any Time unhappily fall, let your Grief and Sorrow testify the true Concern you have for having offended so good a God.

**VI. To love Him above all Things.** God is jealous of his own Glory, and requires the whole Man, and would not that any Creature should be his Rival: And in Truth, what is more fit and reasonable? The infinite Perfections of his Nature, and his abundant Loving-kindness towards you, ought they not to prevail upon you to give Him your Heart? Take off your Affections from the Things of this World; and place them upon God, who is so infinitely amiable. Nothing will better discover the inordinate Love of any Creature, than if in any Kind it makes us neglect our Duty to God, by doing what he has forbidden, or by omitting what he has commanded.

**VII. To desire that He be loved by others.** The Zeal which you ought to have for the Glory of God, will serve you as an Evidence to distinguish whether you really love him: Is your Discourse often of Him? Are you zealous that others should not offend Him? Do you contribute what you can, by your Words and by your Actions, to the Conversion of Sinners, and to the Perseverance of the Good? And is it your great Endeavour that God be worshipped, loved, and served, not only by yourself, but by others also?

**VIII. To converse frequently with GOD.** Nothing is more agreeable than the Company of those we esteem and value, and we need no Argument to press us to embrace all Oppor-

Opportunities to enjoy it. The only Means we have of conversing with God here below, is by frequenting his Ordinances, by attending to what he teaches us in his Word, by approaching the Throne of Grace by Prayer, and by expressing the great Sense we have of his Love towards us in the Communion of the Body and Blood of his Son: If we neglect such blessed Opportunities when they offer themselves, it is a Sign our Hearts are but cold and indifferent towards Him: for if his Love governed us, we should count *a Day in his Courts better than a Thousand*, and the Entertainments of his Table more delicious than when Oil and Wine increased; we should value the Liberty of addressing Him, before any temporal Satisfaction, and the Instructions of his Word would be like Marrow to the Bones.

IX. *To serve Him with Fervour and Delight.* When the Service of a dear Friend is concerned, there is a certain Eagerness and free Air in performing it, which sufficiently shews the Joy and Satisfaction this Opportunity of serving him gives us. Would you be convinced of your Love to God, serve Him with Pleasure, and not with Reluctance; serve Him with Fervour; and not with Indifference. If you pray in private or public, if you are at your Work or Business, or engaged in any other Action, do it chearfully, fervently, and exactly. It is for God that you

work, it is his Love makes you devout; let it appear therefore, by the Joy and Fervour you shew in serving Him, that God is the beloved Object of your Soul, and that you are so far from being tired in his Service, that you covet nothing more than Opportunities to give him fresh Testimonies of your Affection.

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## CHAP. V.

FOR MONDAY.

### *The Love of our Neighbour.*

AFTER having given Proofs of our Love to God, we are obliged to exercise it towards our Neighbour. This Sort of Charity is a Virtue very necessary in our Converse in this World, it unites Men together; and the Want of it occasions many Disorders in civil Society. But alas! how rare is this Virtue in this Age! Men love one another sometimes from Interest, from Humour, from Inclination; but few from a Principle of Christian Charity: And yet, how many obligations do we lie under to practise it?

1. In *respect of GOD*. He has frequently recommended it to us in his holy Word, and  
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by his exprefs Command has made it our Duty. Our bleſſed Saviour has earneſtly urged it upon his Followers. If you have any Love for God, you muſt make it appear by your Love of your Brethren: for *He that loveth not his Brother, whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God, whom he hath not ſeen?* And what a prevailing Obligation ſhould it be to us, to conſider that God is pleaſed to reckon all the Good we do to others, as done to Himſelf: *Inaſmuch as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe, ye have done it unto me.*

2. In reſpect of our **NEIGHBOUR**. He is our Brother, equally God's Creature, made after his Image, and the Object of his Love and Kindneſs, with ourſelves; and therefore you ought to love him. The ſame precious Blood that was ſhed for you, redeemed him; the ſame Sacraments that feed you, nourish him; and the ſame Hope of eternal Life, which purifies you, animates him; and therefore you ought to love him: The Love of a Mother to her Children, ought to be the Pattern of our Charity; this would make you ready at all Times to do them Good, patiently to bear with their Imperfections, and to perſiſt in deſpite of all Diſcouragements.

3. In reſpect of **OURSELVES**. The Re-compence of Reward which God has promiſed to thoſe that love their Neighbour, ſhould encourage and excite you to the Per-formance of this Virtue. When Jeſus Chriſt

is represented in Scripture, as pronouncing the irrevocable Sentence of a happy or miserable Eternity, we are told, he will particularly enquire, whether we have fed the Hungry, and clothed the Naked, &c. Besides, it is our Interest in this World; by our Kindness to others we bespeak theirs, whenever we stand in Need of it; the great Secret to procure the Love of others, is upon all Occasions to testify our Love towards them.

Exercise this Virtue.

I. In *your Thoughts*: By entertaining no disadvantageous Opinions of your Neighbour; by not giving Way to groundless Suspicions and rash Judgments concerning him; by throwing them back when they offer themselves, with a Reflection upon yourself; *Lord, how quick sighted am I in regard to the Faults of others, but how blind in discovering my own!* A charitable Man makes the most candid Judgment of every Body; and when his Neighbour's Actions are capable of a double Interpretation, he puts the best upon them. The ordinary Rule of judging others by, is ourselves: and when our own Inclinations are bad, and our Wills bent upon that which is Evil, we easily persuade ourselves that our Neighbour governs himself by the same Measures.

II. In *your Words*. Here a particular Guard must be set, because there are so many  
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Ways of transgressing our Duty. Some upon the least Provocation give bad Language, speak with Anger and Contempt of others, which no Pretence whatsoever can justify. Others make it their Business to divert themselves at the Expence of others by Raillery, and say every Thing that comes in their Minds to gratify their Passion.

The Talent of *Raillery* is very dangerous, and therefore it is best to keep at a Distance from it. For, *first*, It is apt to injure ourselves, by making us light and trifling, and by impairing the Spirit of Devotion. A Mind thus corrupted, which makes a common Practice of turning the most serious and sacred Things into Ridicule, can have but a very indifferent Taste for Religion; By Degrees, it will quite extinguish it in those that give themselves this Liberty, and in those that are diverted by it. And, *secondly*, It is offensive to others, because it wounds the Rules of Charity. At first these merry Gentlemen pretend only to divert themselves and the Company; but afterwards their Railleries become tiresome, or their Jests have too much Piquancy, and very often they end in Disputes and Quarrels.

Those that next offend in their Tongue, are the *Evil-speakers*; and alas! one sees but too many who cannot converse without making their Neighbours' Faults the Subject of it; who being pushed on by Envy, or by

an unhappy Custom, censure and detract as often as they speak. They endeavour, indeed, sometimes to excuse themselves, by pretending, it is only by Way of Sport and Diversion; but what a cruel Pleasure is it, to play with Men's Honour and Reputation, which to some is dearer to them than their Lives? At other Times they pretend they say nothing but what every Body knows; when, alas! their Neighbour's Faults are far from being so public as they think; but granting that they were so, it is a Sign we have but little Charity for our Neighbour, when we endeavour, instead of concealing his Imperfections, to entertain all Companies with the Relation of them: By this Means they certainly spread, and the Man is made more contemptible.

The *proud Man* is not less at Variance with Charity, than the *Evil-speaker* and *Detracter*. He cannot bear to hear any one commended; so much Praise as is given to another, seems to lessen his own Glory, which makes him as ingenious in diminishing the Reputation of others, as he is dextrous in aggrandizing his own. His Vanity makes him believe, that when the Imperfections and Frailties of others are discovered, he himself will only remain fit to receive Applause and Commendation. Now, is not this the very Top of Envy and Pride?

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All these Ways of transgressing the Rules of Charity you must carefully avoid. **Speak** all the Good you know of your Neighbour, and let your Discourse tend to raise his Character. Never say any Thing that may shock the least Person in the World; and speak of others with the same Reservedness that you desire they should speak of you.

III. In *your Actions*. Be so far from hurting your Neighbour, either in his Person or Estate, as to do him all the good Offices that lie in your Power. Exercise all Acts of Mercy and Charity in relation to him, for which you can never want an Opportunity. Are there not many ignorant Souls to be instructed, and many Sinners to be reprov'd, many Poor to be relieved, many Sick to be visited, and many Prisoners to be set free?

Never pretend that your Charity may be abused, and that you meet with Returns of Ingratitude; this Thought may be apt to lead you into the wrong. But granting that you meet with such Discouragement, and that Men return Evil for the Good you do them, still persevere from the Motive of Love to God; he will never forget your Labour of Love: The more disinterested your Charity is, the more it tends to Perfection.

IV. *Bear with the Infirmitie of others.* Why are you so apt to be angry with your Neighbour? God is patient towards you, notwithstanding your daily Provocations, and you

continually stand in Need of the Forbearance of others: This makes it reasonable, that you should be kind and compassionate towards them. You indulge too much your own ill Humour, and are apt to entertain Aversions and Antipathies against some People; which is the Occasion that the least of their Faults become unsupportable to you. Remember the Maxim which St. *Paul* recommended to the first Christians: *Bear ye one another's Burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ.*

You may object, that your Neighbour is in the wrong: Supposing he is so, he is the greater Object of your Compassion; but do not contract Guilt to yourself, by any unchristian Behaviour. The Injury, it is possible, was provoking; and the Contempt with which he used you touched you very near; sacrifice your Resentment to the crucified Jesus; the more the Person was to blame, and the greater your Mortification, the more it raises your Charity in pardoning, in despite of any Temptation to the contrary.

Remember always, that you converse not with Angels, but with Men, who are frail and inconstant, and seldom in the same Humour, so that an unguarded Expression may easily fall from them. Lay not any Stress upon a rash Word, change the Discourse, or jest it off, but be sure not to suffer yourself to be provoked. If you neglect it, no more  
Notice

Notice will be taken of it; but if you give Way to Anger and Resentment, the very Remembrance of the Word or Action that disturbed you, will give you fresh Uneasiness; whereas if you neither think nor speak of it more, the Sense of it will immediately wear off.

Besides, there is a great Inconvenience in being so quick to resent every little Thing that is said or done against us. They that provoke you, being not governed by strict Principles of Virtue, will make this Advantage of it, that they will say and do Things on Purpose to vex you, and to increase your ill Humour.

V. *Condescend to others.* Our Tempers and Inclinations are so different, and often so opposite the one to the other, that it is hard if the Rules of Charity are not frequently transgressed. You must therefore be upon your Guard, that the most provoking Occasions do not force you from your Charity. Let others be never so much in the wrong, do not persevere in maintaining the Debate; submit to others; at least by your Silence; and if People are of another Mind, never persist in the Matter: Why should you torment yourself about what is impossible? Which is, to change their Apprehension of Things; and if you could succeed in it, yet you ought not at the Hazard of your

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Charity,

Charity, which, in the Sight of God is of great Price.

VI. *Be zealous for the Good of your Neighbour.* It is but a small Instance of your Charity, if you only relieve those Wants of your Neighbour that relate to his Body, and at the same Time neglect to help him in the more important Concerns of his Soul. Be ready therefore, upon all Occasions, to assist him with good Counsel and Advice; to reprove him in the softest and gentlest Language, and with such a Temper of Mind, that he may plainly perceive your Aim at promoting his true Welfare; to comfort him under his Affliction; Endeavour to recover him from the Ways of Sin and Error, by your Example, as well as by your Discourse. Let your Conversation excite him to Piety and Devotion; and by your Prayers, and other Christian Methods, let it appear, that the Salvation of his Soul is dear to you.

VII. *Rejoice when any Good happens to you.* If you loved your Neighbour as you ought, his Prosperity would give you a great deal of Pleasure, and you would be touched with a true Concern for his Misfortunes. But most Men are governed by a contrary Principle, which makes them repine when their Neighbours flourish, and secretly rejoice when they fall into any considerable Disasters. This should put you continually upon your Guard against the first Motions of Envy,  
that

that you may not give Way to them; this should excite you to testify your Satisfaction when your Neighbour is pleased, because it is a Mark of Affection which you owe to him; sympathise with him under Calamity; if it is in your Power, comfort him, and soften his Misery, but at least let him never want your Compassion.

VIII. *Overcome any Aversion you have entertained.* As some certain Persons please us by a Sort of Sympathy, we know not why; so others displease us by a Sort of Antipathy which we can give no Account of. It is somewhat difficult entirely to conquer these Aversions, because sometimes they proceed from Nature and Constitution: But we may prevent the outward Appearance of it, by suppressing all contemptuous and reproachful Language.

Antipathy thus governed, may be compared to a wild Beast chained: as long as you keep it confined it is not able to do any Hurt; but if you once let it loose, it is incredible what Mischief it will do to yourself and every Body else. As long as you give no outward Testimonies of your Aversion, it will be attended with no ill Consequence, provided you do not please yourself with such Thoughts, but rather endeavour to suppress the irregular Motions they may occasion; but if once you give way to your Antipathy by doing every Thing which that dictates, in  
a little

a little Time you will contract a great deal of Guilt. Therefore bear with Patience whatever is shocking to you in other People, and neither by Word or Gesture discover the Aversion and Uneasiness that they give you, though it may be sometimes a Complaint might be justifiable. But this is a great Instance of strong Virtue.

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## CHAP. VI.

FOR TUESDAY.

### *Humility.*

THE great Condescension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in taking upon him human Nature, and in submitting to all the Frailties and Infirmities of it, Sin only excepted, purely for our Benefit and Advantage, ought to animate and excite us all to the Practice of *Christian Humility*, the Foundation of all other Virtues, very peculiar to the Institution of the Religion established by our Saviour, and unknown to the wise Men and Philosophers of the Gentile World, by the Practice of which, we become acceptable,

I. To God. For he hath declared, that his Delight is among the Humble and the Lowly ;

Lowly; it is upon them that he bestows his choicest Favours; and it is their Prayers that find Access and Acceptance with Him: Nothing is more contradictory to his Holy Name than Pride; upon which Account God takes a particular Pleasure in confounding a Vice, which endeavoured to oppose his Glory in Heaven, and does its utmost to rob Him of it upon Earth. Nothing is so effectual to procure the Grace of God, and to preserve the Continuance of it, and even to recover it when it is unhappily lost, as Humility. But this Virtue does not only make us acceptable to God; but,

II. To *Men*. What can be more amiable than he who despises no Body, who never praises himself, and who makes it his Glory to give way to others? And, on the contrary, what is more hateful than a proud Man? He is odious to every one, no Body can bear him, and every one endeavours to mortify him, in order to bring down his Vanity: If he meets with any considerable Humiliation, no Body grieves to see his Pride punished. Supposing a Person endowed with all the advantageous Qualities of Body and Mind, adorned with all the Gifts of Nature and Grace, if he grows vain, and prides himself in them, he immediately exposes himself to Contempt. Nothing is more hateful to God and Man than Pride: but Humility farther makes us acceptable and easy.

III. To

III. To *Ourſelves*. Humility preſerves the Peace of the Mind, makes us quiet and eaſy; whereas Ambition is the conſtant Source of Trouble and Vexation. The proud Man is never at reſt; and as he is extremely ſenſible of the Point of Honour, the leaſt Word touches him to the Quick; a little Contempt and Neglect ſinks him; and the Praises and Incenſe that is given to others, ſeem to reflect upon his Honour and Reputation.

His main Deſign is to raiſe himſelf above others; and in order to that Purpoſe, he ſpares neither Calumny, nor Detraction, nor Falſhood: If he does not ſucceed in his Aim, as it is very often abortive, Vanity and Ambition having no Bounds, he is expoſed to an unaccountable Uneaſineſs, great Trouble and Anguiſh attends his Diſappointment: Whereas, the humble Man never increaſes the Mortifications that happen to him, by fretting and vexing; becauſe he eſteems himſelf unworthy of Honour, and as deſerving that Contempt he meets with. The ſhorteſt Way to Happineſs is, to fly Ambition; and if we aim at a quiet and contented Life, we muſt not exalt ourſelves, nor do any Thing through Strife and Vain-glory; for if we indulge this deſtructive Paſſion, *Haman's Fate* will be ours; and in the Miſt of Honour, Plenty, and Abundance, we ſhall, with him, be apt to compl. and ſay, *all this availeth nothing*, So ab.

is a little Neglect to sour all the Enjoyments of a proud Man.

This Virtue must be practised,

I. *In our Thoughts.* Maintain always a low Opinion of yourself, and preserve a great Esteem and respect for others. Acknowledge that once you were nothing; and that since you have received your Being from the Bounty of God, you have abused it, by offending him. Own your present Condition to be Weakness and Misery, and that you can do nothing without the Assistance of divine Grace. And as to what is to come, it is certain your Body must be the Food of Worms, though it is uncertain in what State and Condition your Soul will be; which should make us *work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling.*

Take Care not to indulge Thoughts of Vanity, not to govern your Actions with a Regard to Men, seeking only to please them. If you are so foolish as to labour for Vain-glory, you will receive no other Recompence than the empty Returns of popular Applause.

II. *In our Words.* Nothing is more contemptible than one who abounds in his own Praises; he is not aware, that instead of increasing his Reputation, he really diminishes it; and by his vain-glorious Conversation, acquires the Character of a proud Man. Be not always making Apologies to thyself, and throwing the Fault upon others, even when you

you have a fair Occasion. This Sort of Humiliation, which you patiently endure, will increase your Virtue in this World, and your Reward in the next.

III. *In our Actions and outward Deportment.* Humility, when once really fixed in your Minds, will necessarily shew itself in your outward Actions. Exercise yourself frequently in such exterior Things as may testify your inward Humility: the best Means to attain this Christian Virtue is often to practise it. Let your Way of Living be conformable to that State and Condition which the Providence of God has placed you in; let no extravagant Expence appear in your Clothes: What signifies so much Luxury? Vanity is a Vice which costs us dear, and makes us but empty Returns. Let not your Gait and Deportment, and your Method of acting and speaking with others, favour of Vanity, and betray the Marks of a proud, conceited Mind; on the contrary, let all your Actions be governed with Modesty and Condescension, in Honour preferring others to yourself.

IV. *In giving way to others.* There are some People, who almost continually employ themselves in comparing themselves with others; in considering whether others pay them the Respect that is due to them: and whether the Merits of such a Size ought to be preferred to theirs. All such Sort of Thoughts should be laid aside, and we shall never say,  
*I am*

*I am more considerable than such a one; it is his Business to give Place to me, and to salute me first, &c.* Honour, as has been observed, belongs more to him that gives it, than to him that receives it. Let it be granted, that you are more considerable than the Person to whom you give Place, by that Means your Glory will shine the brighter; for it will plainly appear, that Virtue and Civility, and not any Obligation, inclined you to make the Condescension.

V. *In avoiding Commendation.* Some, who can forbear prailing themselves, are too much pleased when others commend them; they seek not their own Glory, but are very glad when it presents itself. Others are very dextrous to give Men a Handle to commend them, and can contrive Occasions to have themselves praised and esteemed.

Encourage no Discourse that offers Incense to yourself: Very often it proceeds from Flattery and Compliment, and at the best, is the Effect of other People's Charity, rather than your own Merit: Turn the Conversation, as soon as you can, to some other Subject; the less Glory you receive from Men, the greater will be conferred upon you by the Hands of God. However you must take Care never to omit any Act of Virtue, though it may tend to your Praise and Commendation; our Duty must be resolutely practised whatever the Consequence is. As  
Praise

Praise must not be the Motive; so neither must it be the Hindrance.

IV. *In suffering Contempt.* It is no small Virtue that consists in bearing Contempt; either your natural Infirmities, or your wilful Faults, or accidental Blunders, will be apt to cover you with Confusion before others. You will meet with indiscreet and passionate People, who, with or without Cause, may be inclined to despise you, and may endeavour to shock you, and make you uneasy: In the Name of God, be not so nice and delicate upon the Point of Honour: bear this Humiliation with Patience, and remember it is more glorious before God and Men to pardon an Injury than to revenge it; and that the Victory you gain over yourself upon such an Occasion, is more acceptable to God than a hundred Acts of a less difficult Virtue.

When we are provoked, Resentment ordinarily follows, we grow sad and uneasy, and presently endeavour to return the Injury we have received by recriminating or complaining, or by returning the Affront in Kind. We call Reason to justify our Passion, and are apt to insinuate, *that our Reputation is concerned as well as the Edification of our Neighbour, who may be scandalized, if he thought you guilty; that upon such an Occasion, not to testify your Resentment would be Stupidity: that if this Affront should be put up, you should draw a hundred others upon you:* So ingenious is Vanity

nity to cover itself with the Pretext of Reason. But be not imposed upon by these false Imaginations and empty Reasons: Let Humility be your Refuge, and receive the Affront with a generous and invincible Patience.

VII. *In rejoicing in Contempt upon the Account of our Duty.* The Perfection of this Virtue extends, not only in the Suffering of Contempt, but to the being pleased with it for Righteousness Sake. Let not the scornful Reproaches of bad Men either abate or diminish thy Zeal in serving God, and in doing good. Let not their profane Jestis weaken thy Faith, or discourage thee in thy Christian Course; but embrace joyfully their unjust Reflections, and their tearing thy Reputation in Pieces, that, in this humbled Condition, thou mayst be more conformable to the blessed Jesus, who made Humility his peculiar Character; and though thy Endowments, and Talents, and Actions, may deserve Esteem and Consideration, yet desire rather to have thy Virtues concealed, whereby they become more bright in the Sight of God, *who seeth in secret, and will reward thee openly.* The Applause of Men might corrupt thy Mind with vain Conceits; might fill thy Fancy with false Pleasure; might tempt thee to ascribe too much Honour to thyself, and too little to God: But their Hatred and Contempt may teach thee to place thy Glory in the Hopes of his Favour! and to pursue more earnestly the pure Delights

Delights of a good Conscience; and does not such an Instance of divine Providence deserve to be rejoiced in?

VIII. *In practising Humility, without desiring Praise upon that Account.* There are some who appear humble, and who give Way to others, but at the same Time are very glad that others should take Notice of it; if they put up an Affront, or bear patiently any Reflection, they are desirous of being applauded. “I know, say they, what you have said against me, but I will think no more of it, since it is a Man’s Duty to bear Contempt for the Love of God.” Another will come and relate the Pains he has taken upon an Occasion of practising his Duty, the Humiliation and Mortification he has suffered. Alas! how these People deceive themselves in thinking that Humility is consistent with Bragging of it, and of their best Actions. The best Part of this Virtue is lost when we desire to make it known to others, when we acquaint them with what we know others say and do against us. Upon these Occasions we should be silent, and not let others perceive that we take any Notice of the Contempt that is poured upon us. True Humility consists in suffering of Humiliation and Mortification, without desiring that any one should know we suffer it.

## CHAP. VII.

FOR WEDNESDAY.

*Patience and Resignation.*

CONSIDERING the many uneasy Circumstances of Life, this Virtue of *Patience* is absolutely necessary. Whence proceed Swearing and Scolding, and Discontent in a Family, which is oftentimes rather a little Hell, than a well regulated Society, but from the Want of this Virtue? It is but patiently bearing a small Miscarriage, a trifling Disappointmet, a peevish or cross Word, and these Disorders could never get any ground. Afflictions are like the Test to Gold, they prove and discover the Truth and Excellency of our Virtues. If any cross Accident befalls us, we look upon ourselves as very unfortunate, instead of esteeming ourselves happy in meeting with an Opportunity of expressing to God our Resignation and Patience. Consider therefore in all Afflictions, these three incontestible Truths:

1. That *God permits them for your Good.* If Afflictions proceeded only from the good Pleasure of God, does it become his Creatures to oppose his Will? But when God permits

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us; and why should we think to arrive at the heavenly *Jerusalem* in a different Way from those who are gone before us? The Captain of our Salvation was made perfect through Sufferings, and our Conformity to him is our Glory and his Delight; upon these Occasions we should think ourselves happy, considering that *these light Afflictions which are but for a Moment, work for us an eternal and exceeding Weight of Glory.* Let us never complain that Sickness and Pain, and other Troubles hinder us from doing the Good we propose and design; because in such Cases, Patience is that proper Exercise of Virtue which God requires from us; and to bear with Patience and Resignation the Afflictions his wise Providence lays upon us, is a greater Degree of Perfection at that Time, than exercising ourselves in good Works.

3. That *Impatience provokes God, and weakens our spiritual Strength.* What an unaccountable Piece of Folly is it, of one Evil to make two: and instead of abating and lessening our Sufferings, to augment and increase them? To what tend our Murmurings and Complaints, our Impatience and Discontent, but to offend God, and to rob us of the Profit and Advantage of our Sufferings? If you submit to them with Resignation, your Virtue, and the Favour of God, increases towards you; but if you murmur and are dissatisfied, your present Sufferings will only

serve to increase those that are reserved for you in the other World. Besides, does your Impatience ease your Afflictions? Does it procure you a Remedy? No, the Evil is incurable by any such Means: Bear it therefore with Patience, and do not make yourself doubly unhappy. It is a Sign and Mark of great Imperfection, not to grow better by the good Things God gives us to enjoy, and to become worse by the evil Things he lays upon us to suffer. In order to exercise this Virtue,

1. Never *murmur against God*. Who would believe that any Man should be hardy enough to complain against God, and should dare to find fault with that Providence he ought to adore? Some are apt to insinuate, that he is very severe; that He seems sometimes to abandon us; that they do not deserve the Treatment they receive from Him; that Justice is on their Side; and that others are to blame. Nay, some carry their Discontent so high, as to break out into passionate and desperate Expressions, as if they were inclined to revenge themselves upon the Deity by their insolent Speeches. Alas! can such People be thoroughly convinced that God is a kind and indulgent Father, that chastises his Children for their Good; that He is a charitable Physician, who prescribes bitter and distasteful Remedies for the Recovery of their Health? Resign therefore yourself to his blessed

bleſſed Will, and addreſs yourſelf to Him after this Manner; *Thy Will be done. I chearfully accept of this Loſs, of this Humiliation, of this Croſs and Affliction, becauſe it is thy Will it ſhould be ſo.*

2. *Never be impatient with others.* It is very common when any Miſfortune befalls us, to blame thoſe who come next in our Way; to find Fault with thoſe that deſerve it, and thoſe that do not. Upon ſuch Occaſions, we utter indecent Words, we indulge injurious Reflections, and ſometimes we are provoked to Blows. Alas! if our Anger is not under Government, we ſhall contract great Guilt to ourſelves.

It is true, we ought ſometimes to reprove others; but we muſt not make a Vice of a Virtue, by adminiſtering Correſtion with Paſſion, and by obſerving no Meaſures in the diſperſing of it. It often happens, that by admoniſhing after an ill Manner, we commit a greater Fault than we deſign to reform.

*Never be impatient with yourſelf.* Aſſure yourſelf, that an impatient Man becomes his own Executioner, and that he torments himſelf by a thouſand needleſs Diſcontents and Inquietudes; he becomes inſupportable to himſelf; every Thing diſpleaſes him; and he entirely loſes the Peace and Quiet of his own Mind. Never let any ill Accident or bad Succeſs of an Undertaking, rob you of that inward Peace, which is the true Mark of a

good Mind, as Unquietness is of an evil one. The Wicked are like the troubled Sea, that can never rest. Even the Sins that you fall into should not draw upon you Vexation of Spirit. Your only Business then is, to humble yourself before God under the Sense of them, heartily to beg his Pardon and Forgiveness, and then to compose yourself to the same Tranquillity you formerly enjoyed.

4. Never *say any thing in a Passion*. It is not then a proper Season to make a Reply, or to undertake any Thing of Consequence; because in a Fit of Anger, Passion clouds the Understanding. Let the Smoke fly off, let the troubled Water settle, and then you will be able to discover, what Reason requires from you, when the Storm of Passion is quieted.

The true Remedy, when you find Anger boil in your Breast, is to retire, or to change the Discourse, or else to impose upon yourself on such Occasions an obstinate Silence, otherwise you will be apt to offend with your Tongue.

I beg you above all Things to be mindful of this Direction; for, sooner or later, you will certainly repent of whatever you shall say or do in Anger.

Let me farther give you a little Hint upon this Subject. I find several are able to moderate themselves when they are provoked to Anger, and can govern their Resentment

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at the Time when they are offended: but some Time after, they apply themselves to their Friends and Intimates, to relate to them the bad Treatment they have received; and under the Pretence of asking Advice, and of seeking Comfort, they will make a long Narration of the Injuries they have received. Now to what Purpose is all this Discourse, and what does it serve for, but to renew their Resentment, which was almost appeased; and to rekindle their Anger, which was almost extinguished? By this Manner of proceeding, your Mind is more exasperated, and you no ways edify him to whom you complain, who easily perceives by your Complaints how sensibly you are touched with the Treatment you have met with.

5. *Be ready to pardon those that offend you.* There are some who take Things so much to Heart, and resent so highly the least Thing that has been done against them, that they make Forgiveness a hard and difficult Work. But this is a great and dangerous Error. We must not be so delicate upon the Point of Honour: These little Things ought to be despised; for if we dwell upon them, if we examine and consider them, our Imagination will quickly magnify them, and the more we think upon them, the more intolerable they will appear to us, and the Fire of Anger will burn more fiercely. If you had not laid so much Stress upon a little Provocation, you

would have been free from the Anguish and Trouble you now suffer.

Never go about to cover your Passion and your Vanity with the Pretext of Piety and Reason, but always remember what I am now about to say to you. If what is said or done against you does you no real Hurt, you ought to despise it. If you suffer any Thing by it, bear it for God's Sake, pardon it willingly, and make Advantage of so fair an Opportunity to improve in Virtue.

6. *Apply yourself to God with Trust in him.* When every Thing succeeds, God is too often forgot; but in the Day of Adversity we seek to him for Relief. The Happiness of Creature Comforts, and the Vanity of all worldly Things, being thoroughly discovered, we address ourselves to Him that can only help us. God does not deny us human Support in our Afflictions, but expects we should put our chief Trust and Confidence in Him, and depend upon Him for the Success of all other Means; by which Method, He very often is prevailed upon to appear in our Behalf: But if he does not, and still thinks fit to deny what we desire, it is because He has something better in Store for us. Always remember this last Hint, that God has something better in Store for you.

7. *Suffer joyfully, and with a Willingness to endure more if God thinks fit.* Is it possible to find any Seed of Joy sown in the Path of Sufferings?

Sufferings? Yes, certainly, they spring up in the Minds of those that are thoroughly convinced that their Sufferings come from God, and therefore delight in the Accomplishment of his blessed Will and Pleasure. Like Soldiers they suffer with Joy, who chearfully obey the Orders of their Prince, when his Service exposes them to the greatest Fatigues. Let not therefore Sorrow and Trouble sink your Spirits; preserve a composed Countenance, and let all your Answers be made with Mildness. And still advance farther in the Temper and Disposition of your Mind, to embrace great Sufferings, if the Providence of God thinks fit to exercise you with greater Trials. *O Lord, if it be thy Will, lay more upon me: all I beg is, that at the same Time thou wouldst be pleased to increase my Patience.*

8. *Conform yourself to the Will of God in those Afflictions which he sends you.* It is agreed, that it is our Duty to submit to what God in his Wisdom shall lay upon us; and that we should always pray, that his *Will may be done*. However, it is very necessary that I should warn you against an ill Practice, too common among those that are otherwise very devout: They are apt to declare their Readiness to suffer, when the Will of God makes it their Duty, to which they desire to conform themselves, but they would fain excuse themselves from the present Affliction that lies upon them,

them, and think any other would be easy to them; but that which they endure, always appears to them unseasonable: They complain it hinders their Endeavour after Christian Perfection; and that instead of improving their Virtue, it increases their Guilt. The Man who is touched in his Reputation, declares how willingly he would submit to any other Affliction that could befall him; but he is not able to bear such injurious Reflections, that strike too near his Heart. The sick Man that is confined to his Bed, which is irksome and very tiresome, complains that his Distemper makes him impatient and discontented, and prevents the Practice of several good Works he designed, if free from his Sickness. The Woman who meets with a perverse Husband, and with obstinate, disobedient Children, would suffer willingly any other Affliction, except that which lies upon her, which she imagines can only serve to increase her Misery in this Life and the next. In short, there is almost no Body but who would be willing to exchange their present Cross for another, and think themselves unhappy in the particular Sort of their Sufferings; whence it proceeds that their Minds are always unquiet, and that they never perfectly resign themselves to the Will of God.

Now all this Management is very unreasonable; for is it not God that sends or permits that particular Affliction? Does not the  
Manner

Manner of your Suffering come from his Hand? Is it for you to determine what He ought to do? And ought you to prescribe to him the particular Cross he should lay upon you? Banish all such Thoughts from your Mind, and let the Cross which he sends you be received with Resignation and Satisfaction, though it may be it is not what you would have chose for yourself: It is sufficient to make you contented and quiet, that it comes from God; and that therefore it is by this Affliction that he designs to make your Calling and Election sure.

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## CHAP. VIII.

FOR THURSDAY.

*Of the Improvement of our Talents, and Cooperation with God's Grace.*

How do you think that the blessed Saints arrived at Christian Perfection in this Life, and at the Happiness of Heaven, which they now enjoy? Why, it was by a faithful Improvement of those Talents God intrusted to their Management; by not receiving his Grace in vain, but by corresponding to it,

carefully endeavouring to make themselves perfect in that State and Condition which God had called them to.

1. *Be content with that Condition God places you in.* Alas! how is it possible for you to arrive at the Happiness of the next Life, but by being faithful and religious in those Circumstances that Providence has determined for you? Be sure instantly to beg of God the Light of his Holy Spirit, when you are about choosing your Calling, or engaging in any particular State and Condition of Life; and be not so much influenced by Passion, by Interest, or any worldly Consideration, as by Reason, as by its Tendency to promote your Salvation, and as by the Advice of your Parents, or a pious faithful Friend. And above all Things desire of God, that He would teach you to do his Will.

2. *Acquit yourself faithfully for the particular Obligations of your Condition.* There are Saints in all Callings, and in all Circumstances of Life: Never pretend therefore, that in your Condition the Difficulties are too great to work out your Salvation; for as the Providence of God has placed you in it, He will not fail to supply you with all such Means as are necessary for your Progress in Piety and Virtue. Be but careful to serve God, and faithfully perform the Duties of your Calling, and you may be sure God will never leave you nor forsake you.

3. Endeav-

3. Endeavour *daily to improve in all Sorts of Virtue.* Men whose Minds are bent upon Heaven, are always advancing in those Paths that lead to it. They are not content only to do their Duty, but strive continually to perform it after a more perfect Manner. They catch at every Opportunity of doing Good to the Bodies and Souls of Men; they are always upon their Guard, to keep their Passions under good Government, and are ready to obey all the Inspirations of God's Holy Spirit. Their Method must be thy Imitation; for thy Happiness will depend upon thy growing in Grace, upon thy improving in all Christian Virtues.

The Method you ought to take must be this :

I. Possess *yourself with the Knowledge of what God requires of you.* This is the first Step you must take: Like *St. Paul*, upon his Conversion, you must cry out, *Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?* The Foundation of a Christian Life must be laid in Knowledge; our Mind must be rightly informed in the Particulars of our Duty, before it is possible we should practise them: And this must relate not only to our Condition in general, but to all the particular Circumstances of our Life, and to those different Offices the Variety of Relations require from us. Beg of God that he would enlighten your Mind with the Knowledge of his Will, that when any Diffi-

culty arises, He would be pleased to make it plain and easy to your Apprehension.

II. *Shew forth your Knowledge by your Works, and correspond to divine Instruction.*

After having informed our Mind with the Knowledge of our Duty, the next Step must be to put it courageously in Execution. Alas! what Improvement have you made of that Light God has conveyed to your Understanding? Of those holy Dispositions with which He has enlivened your Will? If he had bestowed such Favours upon others, they would have made a better Use of them, and by this Time have attained large Degrees of Piety; which Reflection ought to confound thy Sloth and Negligence.

God has done his Part when he enlightens our Minds, and influences our Affections; but it is our Business to walk as the Children of Light. He has sufficiently declared his good Will towards us, by furnishing us with so many Means of Grace, our Care must be to make a right Use of them; for by the Abuse of them we shall be answerable, not only for the Grace we have neglected, but for those further Degrees God had prepared for us, if we had received as we ought his first Favours. Grieve not therefore the Holy Spirit, who is the Author of Peace and Joy, but render thyself obedient to his holy Inspirations.

III. *Neglect not the least Degree of Grace God bestoweth upon you.* If thou understoodst

the Value of the least of his Favours, and of those good Thoughts which pass unregarded by thee, thou wouldst certainly esteem them very highly, and not render them ineffectual by thy stupid Carelessness. Every Spark of a good Thought should be blown into a Flame, and produce a suitable Practice in thy Life and Conversation. God stands knocking at the Door of your Heart, do not refuse to open it and let Him in; but remember always, that he bestows his Grace in Proportion to our Use of it. A right Improvement of the first Degree, prepares us for a larger Communication; and the Contempt of his first Offers, makes us still more unworthy of his merciful Compassion towards us: *To him that hath shall be given; and to him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath.* If any Man love me, says our Saviour, John xiv. 23. *he will keep my Words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our Abode with him.*

IV. *Be careful to distinguish the Motions of God's Spirit from those of the evil One's.* The Devil can transform himself into an Angel of Light, and gild over his Bait with specious Pretences to deceive thee. The Thoughts that offer themselves, and the Season of them, must be nicely observed, that we may not be imposed upon.

This Direction is very important. For Example, when an Opportunity offers of practising

practising an Act of Mortification, of Humility, of Charity, or of Patience, &c. you may be prevailed upon, by a false Persuasion, to think that that Act of Virtue cannot, or ought not to be performed at that Time; that it is unseasonable, and though good in itself, may better be adjourned to another Opportunity; and so instead of complying with that holy Motion which solicits you to Good, by listening to the Deceit of the evil One, you are diverted from it. Thus in our Prayers, when our Minds should be fixed upon God, to whom we address, and upon those Things we desire to be supplied with, our Thoughts will sometimes be taken up in projecting some Work of Charity, and the Means of accomplishing it. Now this, though good in itself, must at that Time be rejected, as an Art the Devil makes use of to divert us from a right Performance of our Devotions. Thus necessary is it, that we should attend to our Thoughts, and the right Season of encouraging them when they are good.

V. Often *consult with your spiritual Guide.* We are all apt to be too partial to ourselves, and are too presumptuous when we lean too much to our own Understandings. Besides, the Guidance of our Pastor is one of the Means God affords for our Improvement, and his Assistance is very necessary to preserve us from being imposed upon. Let him be acquainted with the State of thy Soul, with  
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those Temptations and Difficulties that assault thee, with those Doubts that oppress thee, with the Sin that does most easily beset thee, and with those Frailties that most frequently overcome thee. Let him know the Posture of thy Mind in thy Devotions; how thou employest thy Time, when at Leisure, and when busy; how thou governest thy Family; how thou dischargest thy Calling; and how frequent thy Mind is refreshed with devout Thoughts.

VI. Faithfully *discharge your Duty*. Let it be no small Part of your Reflection to examine with what Care you perform the Obligations you lie under,

1. Towards *God*. The Service of God ought to have the Preference in all our Actions; see therefore, whether Sloth, or too eager a Concern for the Things of the World, does not make you omit paying him that Devotion and Attendance which he requires from you.

2. Towards *yourself*. Would it not be an unpardonable Folly, so to mind others, as to neglect one's self? Are you careful to make a daily progress in Virtue? Do you perform all your Actions with Exactness and Regularity? Are the Duties of your Relation and Calling discharged with their due Perfection?

3. Towards *others*. If you have a Family under your Government; what Care do you take in the Education of your Children, in  
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the Instruction of your Servants, and in every Thing that relates to the temporal and spiritual Affairs of it? If you have the Cure of Souls; what Zeal do you shew in the Discharge of your sacred Functions? What Concern appears to spare those for whom Christ died? If you are a Judge or Civil Magistrate; what Impartiality in distributing Justice? What Diligence and Fidelity in executing the Trust committed to you? &c.

Remember always, that as every State and Condition has its Advantages, so it is not without its Difficulties and Temptations. It is in Heaven only that we shall be placed beyond the Reach of Danger, and the Fear of any Relapse. Consider therefore the particular Temptations of your Circumstances, and in what Manner they may be apt to hinder your Increase in Piety; reflect upon those Faults that most frequently occur to People in your Condition, and endeavour carefully to avoid them, that you may, by the Mercy of God, *be numbered among his Saints in Glory everlasting.*

CHAP. IX.

FOR FRIDAY.

*MORTIFICATION.*

It is not to be doubted, but that when you seriously reflect upon the Crucifixion of your Saviour for the Sins of the World, transacted upon this Day of the Week, you may be prevailed upon to undertake the Work of *Mortification*. This Prospect of a crucified *Jesus* has Motives sufficient to humble the most sensual Sinner, and to put him upon Acts of Self-denial : especially when you have considered the absolute Necessity of this Virtue : And this in respect,

1. To *what is past*. Though we are made capable of Pardon and Reconciliation to God, by the Merits of *Jesus Christ* ; yet if we do not punish ourselves for our Sins in this World, we shall be more liable to suffer for them in the next. Exercise the Part of a severe Judge upon yourself, and execute the Sentence ; that you may prevent the Justice of God, in the Vengeance He takes upon the Effeminate and Voluptuous Sinner. Your Acts of Intemperance and Excess must be mortified, by abstaining from those lawful Pleasures you have abused : Your extrava-

gant.

gant and immoderate Mirth, by Tears of Sorrow and Compunction; your Acts of Fraud and Injustice, by Restitution and Charity; the Follies and Gaieties of trifling Conversation, by Solitude and Retirement; the Freedoms of your Tongue, and the Liberties you have taken in reflecting upon others, by Silence, and religious Meditation. If any one fell into any notorious Sin, after Baptism, the primitive Church thought it not sufficient that he should repeat his Crime no more; but he was obliged by a long Course of *Mortification*, by *Fasting*, *Prayer*, *Tears*, and *Good Works*, to endeavour to wash out the Stain and Guilt.

2. *To what is Present.* The Inclinations of the Flesh carry us to forbidden Pleasures; and our Minds are bent upon gratifying the Senses. This makes it necessary to keep your Body under; to subject it to Reason; to apply your Mind to spiritual Objects, by subduing your irregular Passions and Appetites. There are multitudes of People condemned to the Miseries of everlasting Darkness, for not abstaining from a particular Pleasure, for not conquering one unruly Passion. There is always Reason to keep a Watch upon our Senses, and to govern our Appetites; because the Love of Pleasure is so great, that it often imposes upon our Understandings, and makes us judge that to be necessary, which is the mere Effect of Sensuality.

3. To

3. To *what is to come*. If the Trouble and Difficulty of practising this rough Method should be apt to abate your Courage, let the great Advantages of it raise your Spirits, and fortify your Resolution. The Habit of Self-denial once acquired, will make the remaining Part of your Life more easy and agreeable; besides, the more we deny ourselves sensual Gratifications, the greater will be our Reward, and the brighter will be our Crown. And indeed we are never truly conformed to the Image of the Son of God, till our Old Man is crucified with Him, and the Body of Sin is destroyed. Let us therefore address ourselves to the Son of God, intreating Him, that He would derive into our Soul the mighty Efficacy of his divine and all-sufficient Sacrifice, in order to accomplish that Sacrifice of our Old Man, which can only qualify us to partake of his Glory.

The Acts of this Virtue consist,

I. In *subduing the Passions*. Here the Foundation of Mortification must be laid. All the Passions, more or less, make their Attacks upon us; but there is always one which is the most governing, and plays the Master in us. This Man is subject to Anger, another to Melancholy. A Word is apt to put this Woman into a Flame, and when she indulges her Humour, she becomes insupportable. Others, it may be, are inclined to Impurity, Gluttony, or Vanity, &c. Now  
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all these Passions must be kept under Government; in order to which, the following Rules must be observed :

The *first* is, to resist the Passion that attacks you, and not to suffer yourself to be prevailed upon to do any Thing which that Passion solicits you to. To all its Suggestions return a positive Denial, and resolutely persist in this Method.

The *second* is, not only to forbear doing what the Passion solicits you to, but to do the contrary. If Anger and Melancholy set upon you, instead of Roughness and Violence, speak with Softness and Affability. If carnal Thoughts and intemperate Desires press upon you, instead of gratifying them, or pleasing yourself with the Representations they would make, turn your Mind upon other Objects, and exercise some Acts of Abstinence and Mortification.

II. In *denying the Senses*. If we will gratify our Senses in every Thing we lawfully may, we shall not be long free from Guilt; for by Indulgence they will acquire a great Power and Empire over us, and then it will be a difficult Task to deny them any Thing: So that if we would secure our eternal Salvation, by conquering and subduing our Senses in all Instances that are sinful, we must take Care not to indulge them in any Instances whatsoever. This Object pleases you, look not too long upon it. This Book is full of  
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Wit, which serves only to gild over the Poison and Danger of it; read it not. It is not to be imagined the great Advantage we shall receive by neglecting to gratify our Senses; Experience only can assure us how it tends to secure our Virtue.

III. In *Practising it upon the smallest Occasions*. Never excuse yourself from Mortification, by saying, that the Occasion that offers for it is inconsiderable: If it is a little Thing, it will cost you the less Pains; but the Consequence is important: Because in these little Things you always assert the Empire over your Passions; from whence it will follow, that in Matters of the greatest Moment you will be Master of yourself, and no Passion will be able to prevail against you.

But the Thing is not so little as you are apt to think: How dear did a Look cost *David*? from which, if he had abstained, he might have preserved his Innocence. An ill-timed Glance of the Eye, obscene Discourse not discouraged, a Thought not quickly rejected, a cholerick Emotion not presently suppressed, have drawn after them a fatal Train of Guilt and Misery.

IV. In *doing Acts of Penance*. The Discipline of the Church is at so low an Ebb among us, that we ought to take the more Care to exercise it upon ourselves. It is certain, the primitive Saints went to Heaven by Watchings and Fastings, &c. They re-  
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trenched from the ordinary Hours of Sleep, to dedicate them to Prayer and Devotion; they refrained frequently from their ordinary Meals, that their bodies might be the better disposed for spiritual Exercises. If they used these Means with so great Success, why shouldst not thou make the same Experiment? If you are not able to reach the Height of their Example, imitate it still in some Measure: If you cannot entirely forbear a Meal, let the Quantity be less, and Quantity be not delicate. If Hours taken from thy ordinary Rest may disturb thee, surely one now and then can bring no great Prejudice to thee.

V. *In cheerfully suffering any Inconveniency you are exposed to.* It is an Effect of the Goodness of God, that He gives us an Opportunity to exercise our Patience, whereby we may enhance our Reward. The Rigour of the Seasons, Cold, Heat, Hunger, Thirst, ill-Weather, Sicknes, Wounds, Victuals ill dressed, a Bed ill made, a disagreeable Smell, the Stinging of a Bee, and a thousand other little Accidents that happen to us, give us a fair Opportunity to promote our Salvation, if we suffer them patiently, without complaining.

VI. *Let no Difficulty discourage you in this Work.* No Man having put his Hand to the Plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God: And we must never imitate those lazy and slothful Christians who  
sink

sink under this necessary Work, and are terrified with the Pain and Trouble it gives them. Consider, 1. That nothing excellent is acquired without Pains: and that therefore no Virtue is to be obtained, except we strive for Mastery. 2. Often reflect, that the more Pains and Labour you bestow, the greater Glory you reap; that the Difficulty raises the Merit of your Virtue, which is more or less acceptable, according to the Pains you take in procuring it. 3. What we perform but seldom, gives us most Uneasiness in the Discharge of it. Let Mortification be familiar to you, and Exercise will make it much more easy to you. 4. Never distrust the Goodness of God; He who has disposed your Mind to begin a good Work, will continue his divine Assistance, in order to enable you to perfect it. 5. Turn your Eyes upon the crucified *Jesus*, who has suffered so much for you while you refuse to deny yourself for Him. Set before you the Example of so many faithful Servants of God, who have practised Mortification, and that in a very eminent Degree. 6. Think often of the Joys of Heaven, which you hope for; and of the Pains of Hell, which you endeavour to avoid; and of the Greatness and Multitude of your Sins; and then you can want no Encouragement to excite you to Mortification and Self-denial.

VII. *Do not contrive Pretences to excuse yourself from it*: Self-love is very ingenious

to give false Colours to our Neglect; and we are so bent upon Pleasure, and so averse to the least suffering, that we readily catch at any Plea to excuse ourselves. If we are to fast, or exercise any other Act of Self-denial, we are apt to urge our own Weakness and the Inconvenience we may suffer from it. If these Pleas were true, they would be reasonable; but very often they are but imaginary, and become great from our Aversion to give ourselves the least Disgust. At another Time, we plead our Circumstances, or our Company, or the Impossibility of doing it, or some other Reason that may make it fit to dispense with ourselves. Yet really our Circumstances are no Hindrance, the Impossibility is only pretended, and the Reasons are vain and trifling. The true Reason is, our own Niceness and Love of Pleasure. In short, the Measure of our Progress towards Christian Perfection must be taken from those Restraints we are able to lay upon ourselves, and from the Conquest we get over all sensual Desires.

## CHAP. X.

FOR SATURDAY.

*Chastity.*

THIS Virtue consists in the due Government of those Appetites which God has planted in us for the propagating of Mankind, and which therefore must be confined within the Bounds of lawful Matrimony; since any other Method of gratifying them, is contrary to that Purity which the Gospel enjoins; *For this is the Will of God, even your Sanctification; that you should abstain from Fornication; that every one should know how to possess his Vessel in sanctification and Honour; not in the Lust of concupiscence, as the Gentiles which know not God; for God has not called us unto Unclean-ness, but unto Holiness.* To the great Neglect of this Virtue, is owing much of that Scepticism and Infidelity which prevails in the World; for if early Breaches of Innocence had not been Made by indulging sinful Passions, Mens' Minds would not be so averse from entertaining the Principles of Religion, founded in the true Reason and Interest of Mankind: Besides, the *Sinning against our own Bodies*, as the Apostles calls it, exposes  
 1. *To Trouble and Anxiety.* If the un-

clean Sinner has not entirely discarded the Fear of God, all the good Principles and Maxims of a virtuous Education stare him in the Face; God's all-searching Eye, from which nothing can be hid; a dreadful Judgment, which nothing can avert; a devouring Fire, which must be his Portion to all Eternity; what Subjects of Horror and Conternation are these! But if he has stifled the Checks of his Conscience, the Eye of Man must still be shunned and avoided; for as bad as the World is, Vice is not the current Stamp; Measures must be concerted, Opportunities must be sought for; our best Friends must be imposed upon, and every Minute we must tremble for fear of being surpris'd and discovered. The Fears of any young Person, seduced by this Passion, are not to be expressed, if there be but the least Remains of Modesty and Sense of Honour; and the Anguish of some Peoples' Minds upon these Occasions, has arisen so high, that they have made away with themselves, to get rid of the Torment of it. What Pains and Diseases it brings upon the Body, are too apparent to be mentioned, and may convince the Sinner how dearly he purchases his forbidden Pleasure.

2. *To Shame and Dishonour.* And this not only upon the Account that it is a Violation of God's Law, and a Contempt of Him, who is the Fountain of true Honour, in which all other Vices agree with this; but moreover, because

because it is contrary to the prevailing Opinion of Mankind, which, in Despite of the general Corruption, has loaded this Vice with Ignominy and Reproach; and because it puts a Man upon many base and dishonourable Actions to gratify it. The Sense of all Nations has made the Honour of Women to consist in their Modesty; and the Word *Virtue*, when applied to them, particularly relates to their Chastity. And if Lying and Treachery, if Perjury and Infidelity, are contrary to the Rules of Honour; if betraying our best Friends, and wronging them in the most sensible Part, be infamous and contemptible; this Vice, which so frequently puts Men upon these base Actions, may be very well reckoned shameful and dishonourable.

3. To *eternal Destruction*. Those who are under the Power of those evil Habits, know but too well the Force of them; and notwithstanding their serious Resolutions at some Times, their Horror of their Condition, their Uneasiness from the Expence that attends their Extravagancies; yet still they are not able to break their Chains, and it must be a Miracle of Grace that recovers them; for the Spirit being subdued by the Flesh, the Obligations of Religion begin to lose their Force, the Means of Religion are first neglected, and then the Principles of it begin to be questioned; and, by Degrees, Men are

made such Captives and Slaves to their Lusts, that their Recovery is desperate, and they are never awakened to a Sense of their Follies, till the Miseries of a sad Eternity make them repent when it is too late. *Let all my Pleasures, O God, be governed by Reason and Religion, that I may not be deaf to good Counsel, not blind to those Things that concern my eternal Welfare.*

This Virtue must be exercised,

I. In *your Thoughts and Desires*. It is possible, the first Motions of your Passion may not be under your own Government, and consequently, that you may not be answerable for them? but it is in your own Power to stifle and suppress them, to reject with Horror and Contempt, and to apply your Minds vigorously upon other Subjects, which will certainly divert them, because the Frame of our Nature is not capable of dwelling intensely upon two Things at the same Time. So that we must take Care not to indulge any filthy Fancies; we must cast away any Scene of Lust that represents itself to us, with Indignation; and here our Security lies in Flight, rather than in looking the Temptation in the Face. We certainly offend in our Thoughts, when we determine to enjoy any unlawful Pleasure, and only expect an Occasion to put it in Execution; besides, we contract Guilt by delighting ourselves with such Thoughts, though we do not design to bring them

them into Act: And as we must govern our Thoughts in looking forward, so we must have the same Guard over them in relation to what is past; for any unclean Passages of our former Lives, must never be reflected upon with Pleasure and Satisfaction; for this is deliberately to delight ourselves with such Follies, which, it may be, Rashness and Surprise engaged us in at first.

II. In *your Words*. Nothing is a greater Sign of a corrupt Heart, than filthy and obscene Discourse: Therefore we must take Care that our Speech does not betray the Disorder of our Minds. Nothing can be a greater Abuse of that noble Faculty of Speech, which distinguishes us from Beasts, and was bestowed upon us to glorify God, and to edify our Neighbour, than to pollute it by lewd and filthy Talk; for hereby we affront his holy Nature, offend the Chaste and Virtuous, and farther corrupt those whose Inclinations are vicious. Besides, at the Day of Judgment, we shall give an Account of all such *idle Words*; and if the vain and unprofitable Talker shall be condemned, where shall the obscene Jester appear?

We must take Care, not only that our Words be free from flagrant Lewdness, but from any double Meaning whatsoever; and never to make use of Words capable of several Senses, with a Design to create any obscene Ideas in those we converse with. Nay,

we must avoid conveying any unchaste Thought to our Neighbour, though we can preserve ourselves from Blame in the Way of expressing it; for this Manner of offending does most Hurt, because the Poison is gilded and made palatable; whereas downright filthy Talk shocks at first hearing, and being directly opposite to natural Modesty, has not so malign an influence. Even in relating Reports and Passages concerning others, we must not so tie ourselves to repeat Particulars, as to offend Christian Modesty; for hereby we contract too great a Familiarity with dissolute Expressions, and corrupt the Minds of the Hearers, by entertaining them with such Things which they cannot learn too late, nor forget too soon.

This filthy Sort of Conversation is most noxious in those who are advanced in Years; because it argues a Mind extremely depraved, and gives too great a Countenance to the Follies of Youth.

III. In *our Actions*. There are many apt to conclude themselves innocent, provided they preserve themselves free from the finishing Scene of Lust, and consequently indulge themselves in all other Manner of Liberties that fall short of the last Act of Uncleanneſs: But herein they deceive themselves; for he that suffers his Eyes to move, and fixes them upon a forbidden Object, will be apt to commit Adultery in his Heart; he that indulges  
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any of his Senses so far as to excite any Desire of forbidden Pleasures, defiles and pollutes his Soul. To preserve our innocence, our Eyes, our Ears, and our Hands, must be kept continent: that is, we must look upon nothing, read nothing, hear nothing, touch nothing, that may inflame our sinful Passions, or dispose us in any Manner to gratify them. All these preliminary Actions have a Degree of Guilt, more or less, as they obtain the free Consent of our Minds, and generally they carry us on to contract greater Guilt; for when Lust is conceived, it bringeth forth Sin: they set us upon a Precipice when corrupt Nature pushes upon our Ruin. Exercise thy Christian Prudence therefore in setting a Guard upon thy own Inclinations, and by avoiding Provocations, to keep thy Passion at due Distance by the use of Reason, lest thou shouldst unawares be surprised by it. Thus *Agessilaus* refused to receive a Kiss from a beautiful Person addressing to him; and *Cyrus* would not suffer himself to behold the Beauty of *Panthea*.

IV. Mortify *your Body*. He that sincerely desires the End, will make Use of all proper Means to attain it. If we resolve to keep our Bodies in Chastity, we must not pamper them, nor exceed in our Measures of Eating and Drinking. The *Axe* must be *laid to the Root of the Tree*, and the Remedy must be applied to the Cause of the Distemper.

There is a Provision for the Flesh, that disposes us to fulfil the Lust thereof; if we would extinguish the Flame, we should not add such Fuel as serves only to increase it. *Fasting* has in all Ages been made use of to this Purpose; and among the many Reasons that enforce the Practice of it, it is not the least considerable, that it restrains the looser Appetites of the Flesh, and disposes us to Sobriety and Seriousness: and when we abate of the Rigour of Fasting, we should not forget to abstain from such Food as is the most nourishing to the Body; for feeding to the full betrays us to loose Mirth; and pampers the unhappy Disease of our Nature, which our chief Business is to cure and conquer.

V. Apply *yourself to some innocent or commendable Study or Business*. The Mind of Man is too active a Principle to continue free from the Exercise of its Faculties, and yet so framed, as not to be able to prosecute various Objects with equal Intensity; the Appetites of our Bodies frequently follow the Bent of our Minds; that which we most think of, we are readiest to put in Practice. The great Force of this Means consists in diverting our Thoughts from dwelling upon forbidden Objects; for when we are prosecuting any Art or Science, when we are employed in innocent Business, or any lawful Calling, we are not at Leisure to entertain Thoughts of Pleasure; the Desires and Appetites of the  
Flesh

Flesh find no Encouragement, and therefore are neglected. Let thy great Care therefore be, to keep thyself always employed; if thou art engaged in a Calling, prosecute it with Diligence and Application: If thy Condition and Quality sets thee above a Profession, the Care of thy own Estate, and the acquiring such Knowledge as may be serviceable to thyself and thy Neighbour, may very well challenge a great Share of thy Time; and by being thus profitably busied, thou wilt leave no Room for the unclean Spirit to enter into thy Soul and tempt thee. We find the Men of Pleasure in the Number of those who are at a Loss how to spend their Time! Idleness is a proper Soil for all Vice to thrive in, and where it prevails, Chastity can seldom maintain its Ground, but is sacrificed to an Enemy always within us, ready to betray us. *Grant, O Lord, that I may always be piously or profitably employed: That I may have no Leisure to indulge the sinful Lusts of the Flesh; nor Time to entertain my Mind with such Thoughts as defile the Soul.*

VI. Distrust *thyself*. How many Men have been ruined, by presuming too much upon their own Strength; by running themselves into Temptations, which they had the Confidence to think they could easily master? But sad Experience has convinced them of their Error, and want of Caution has betrayed their Virtue, and made Work for Repentance.

ance. How justly might we blame a Candidate in the *Olympic Games*, who should contend for Victory, without all those preparatory Exercises which are necessary to qualify him to win the Prize? Who should lay such Stress upon his natural Powers as to neglect the Discipline of Art and Diet, and all that preliminary Management which fits the Body to exert itself to the greatest Advantage? *Solomon* pronounceth that Man *happy that feareth always*, and makes Confidence the Portion of Fools: *The Fool rageth, and is confident*. We shall find ourselves deceived, if we think to go far in a slippery Path without a Fall, if we presume to indulge ourselves to such a Point without Danger; for as a Man can have no Assurance of that, so if one could, who can answer for themselves, that they shall keep within the Bounds they propose? The Corruption of Nature is great and the Violence of our Appetites impetuous, so that if we give them all the Liberty we lawfully may, they will quickly master us, and snatch at such Gratifications that are unlawful to enjoy. From a sense therefore of thy own Weakness, and of the Power of Temptation, keep at a Distance from all such Circumstances that may possibly corrupt thy Innocence: Trust not thyself in reading Books that are framed to move thy Passions; to gaze upon Pictures that raise thy Desires; to converse with Company that delight to shew their Wit  
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in filthy Subjects. The more diffident you are of yourself, the less liable you will be to expose yourself to Danger.

VII. Avoid *Familiarity with the contrary Sex*. Love of all Passions, is the most dangerous, because the most violent, and hardest to be overcome. Now all Intimacies of this kind, are Occasions that may fire our Passions, and are therefore to be avoided. It is by this Method that our Affections are insensibly engaged; and when they are firmly bent towards an Object, they seek to gratify themselves by Enjoyment. Even that Friendship that is founded purely upon Virtue and Merit, and is the least supported by Sense, may in the Issue prove fatal and dangerous: For though at first we are only charmed with the Beauties of the Mind, entertained with a good Understanding, edified by a modest and virtuous Behaviour; yet, by Degrees, our Admiration and Delight in those Accomplishments extends itself to the whole Person, and the Talents of the Mind render the Body more pleasing and agreeable; so that what begins in the Spirit, without great Care and the Grace of God, may end in the Flesh.

VIII. *Pray frequently and fervently*. This is the Way to procure that Grace of God which is so necessary to preserve us from falling, or to recover us if we are so unfortunate as to transgress. The *Frequency* of it will fix our Minds upon spiritual Objects, and fill us

with a Sense of God's being present every where; an Impression which is very proper to keep our Appetites under Government; for who will not be restrained from gratifying them, when he remembers the all-seeing-Eye of God, who is infinite Purity? The *Fervour* of it will deaden our Affections to sensual Enjoyments; for when we are importunate for Things more excellent, and of which we have greater Need, we shall so pass through Things Temporal, as not to forfeit our Title to those which are Eternal. Beg therefore of God, that He would create in you a perfect Abhorrence of all Impurity; that He would cleanse you from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit; that he would set a strict Guard on thy Senses, turn away thine Eyes, stop thine Ears, bridle thy Tongue, and restrain thy Hand from all Uncleanness. That he would give thee Grace to fly all Incitements or Opportunities of corrupting thy Neighbour or thyself.

And when impure Thoughts are the Remains of a bad Life, and the Punishment of those evil Habits we had formerly contracted, we must endeavour to quench this Fire with the Tears of Repentance for what is past: We must confess before God the Impurity of our former Lives, and abhor ourselves for those Follies, whereby we have offended Him: We must beg him to strengthen our Resolutions, and in his good Time to cast out the Remains of the unclean Spirit: We must

must look upon them as a just Correction for our former Disorders, and submit with Patience and Humility; saying, with *Joseph's Brethren*, *We have deserved these Things, because we have sinned.*

We must the rather apply ourselves to this Remedy of Prayer, because through its Power and Strength, all other Means become successful and effectual.

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## CHAP. XI.

### *Reflections relating to the conquering of any Vice.*

**AFTER** having prescribed to you the Means to obtain any considerable Virtue, it is necessary at present that I should give you some Directions in order to the conquering of any Vice, and to enable you to surmount those Temptations, which appear as so many Obstacles and Hindrances to your Perfection. It is true, this Life is a perpetual Warfare, where a thousand Occasions offer themselves of contending with Enemies, that want neither Inclination nor Malice to destroy us; we must either oppose those Vanities of the World, which constantly allure us, or resist those assaults the Devil makes upon us, or condemn those flattering Caresses

of the Flesh, whereby it seeks to ruin us. But besides all these Temptations, from which no Body is exempt, there is always one more fierce than the rest, which wages a cruel War against us: It is the Master Passion of our Minds, the Sin which does most easily beset us: it being certain, that every one has a weak Place, over which he ought particularly to watch. The following Method may be serviceable towards the conquering any darling Sin.

I. *To fear it.* The first Step to be made, is to be apprehensive of that Sin to which you are most subject. It appears to you, it may be, but as a Trifle, a Matter of small Consequence: Alas! there are many, who made the same Judgment as you do, and who, giving themselves little or no Concern to get rid of a Passion to which they were most inclined, have thereby been betrayed into many deplorable and dangerous Faults; and their unhappy Fall has proved sometimes irrecoverable. That little Passion to which you begin to be subject; that Liberty you indulge of gratifying your Senses in Hearing, Seeing, and Touching every Thing that pleases you; that Vanity which already takes possession of your Hearts, and which disposes you upon all Occasions to prefer yourself before others; alas! you ought to fear lest these Passions in the Bud should in a small Time blow and flourish, lest little Sins become great ones,  
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and, in the Issue, prove the deplorable Source of your Ruin and eternal Destruction. To prevent so dismal a State, you must be always upon your Guard, and must live under a constant Sense of those dreadful Evils, to which the particular Corruption of your Nature exposes you.

II. To *resist it*. It is not enough to dread the bad Consequences of a governing Passion, but we must take all Occasions to resist and oppose it; so that it may not get the better of us, by making us do whatever it suggests to us: For if we do not deny it the Gratification it pretends to, it will quickly get Ground upon us, and fortify itself to such a Degree, that the Conquest will be much more difficult, if we are ever so happy as to overcome it. How comes it to pass that Anger, Luxury, and Vanity, Pride or Covetousness, prevail as much upon you now, as they did ten Years ago? Alas! you give no Check to these Passions; you are provoked against a Person that shocks you; and instead of resisting your Anger, and moderating your Passion, you give Way to it, and say all the injurious Things you can think of against the Person, that offends you. Company, and good Liquor, tempt you to drink to Excess; instead of denying your Appetite, and resisting the Offer, you comply with both; so that you immediately perform what the Temptation suggests to you; and after the same  
Manner

Manner you practice in Relation to other Vices. What Wonder therefore if you are always subject to a Vice which you have never Résolution enough to oppose!

But there is still a greater Inconveniency; which is, that you are not only subject to the same Vice continually, which you do not resist, but that you daily become more subject to it: The Habit of the Sin grows stronger, and by frequent repeated Acts it is so rooted in you, that it becomes almost impossible to conquer it. Thus you may see then how important a Matter it is to resist it.

III. Fly *from it*. Your Enemies are so dangerous, that it is always safer to avoid meeting with them, than to expose yourself to the Hazard of being overcome. I should do you no inconsiderable Piece of Service, if I could thoroughly convince you, that a Person that exposes himself to the Occasion of Sinning, is half-conquered; and that among those who trust themselves in dangerous Circumstances, very few escape. We are so weak of ourselves, and Temptations are so strong, and we have so great a Bias to that which is evil, that if we add to this an Occasion of Sinning, how difficult will be our Retreat?

IV. Pray *against it*. In vain we attempt the Conquest of any Vice, without Strength from above; and since by your own Experience you find it a difficult Work, you can-

not be too earnest for the Help and Assistance of God's Grace: particularly when you approach the Altar, and commemorate the Sacrifice of your dear Redeemer, pray that the Virtue of it may extend to the Sin that doth most easily beset you, that it may strengthen your Resolutions against it, and fortify you in the Day of Trial. Let the dreadful Consequences of it frequently be the Subject of your Meditations, that your Mind being thoroughly impressed with a great Horror of the Vice you are most subject to, you may be less liable to commit it for the Time to come.

V. *Examine yourself often.* Serious Reflection upon ourselves often repeated, is an admirable Instrument of Reformation. By this Means, no Vice can make any considerable Progress without being detected. This gives us an Occasion to consider the false Steps we have made, and those Circumstances that have been the Cause of them, and those Remedies which are most proper to apply for the Cure of them.

VI. *Persevere.* The Perseverance I recommend to you, consists in the constant Use of those Means I have offered to you; and not to follow the Example of many, who after a short Trial of the Remedies prescribed, desist from the Use of them, and in a Week's Time, no more think of the Directions that have been given than if they had  
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never been mentioned. And farther, it consists in not being discouraged by an Advantage the Enemy may get over us; and notwithstanding the Faults we may sometimes commit, never to let go our Hopes of amending them. It is one of the great Artifices of the Devil, to persuade the Sinner that it is lost Labour to attempt to mend his Life; and his Recovery is impossible; and that his evil Habits are too deeply rooted to be conquered. Never give Heed to this lying Spirit, but raise your Courage to do your Duty better for the Time to come.

I shall conclude these Reflections, by laying before you those Methods the Devil makes Use of, in order to your Destruction. He first attacks you by bad Thoughts, and then endeavours to make you pleased with them. After this first Attack, his next Point is to solicit your Consent to those bad Thoughts; and from thence he stirs you up to put them in Execution. From Actions frequently repeated, he forms our evil Habits, and our evil Habits bring upon us as it were a Necessity of Sinning, and this Necessity brings forth Death, the eternal Death of the Sinner. Your Business therefore must be to countermine his Projects; 1. By resisting all evil Thoughts, and throwing them out of your Minds. 2. By not denying your Consent, but by making it contrary to the Thought, protesting at you will

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ther die than offend Him. 3. By never proceeding to commit the sinful Action, but by courageously opposing the Temptation, that you may obtain the Crown of Victory reserved for all the faithful Servants of God.

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CHAP. XII.

*To be fervent in Spirit, and to be constantly resolved to serve God with the best of our Powers, is an admirable Instrument of Christian Perfection.*

**I** SHALL at present set before you two Sorts of Persons, of a different Character. The first are such as make it their chief Business to seek after God, who desire nothing more than to please Him; whose Discourse is chiefly of Him, and whose Minds are filled with the Ideas of his infinite Excellency and Perfections. If any Opportunity offers itself of practising any Virtue, they presently embrace it with Eagerness; and nothing administers to them greater Joy and Satisfaction, than many such Occasions of serving God. If any Temptation attacks them, they resist it with great Vigour, and make it a Foundation for the Exercise of many noble Acts of Virtue.

**Virtue.** They perform all their Actions with so much Exactness, and with such a certain agreeable Fervour, as plainly demonstrates that they are animated by the Holy Spirit of God. What do you think is the Reason that these Persons govern themselves with so much Perfection? the only Account that can be given of it is, that they are fervent in Spirit, and fully bent in their Mind to serve God to the utmost of their Power.

The Character of the other Sort of Persons consists in a certain Slothfulness, which appears in all their Actions: If they pray, it is with continual Distractions of Mind, and without being affected with what they are about. God is very rarely in their Thought, and heavenly Things are seldom the Subject of their Conversation. If they are tempted, they give Way to the Temptation. If any Opportunity of doing Good presents itself, they either never reflect upon it, or if they take it into their Thoughts, they have not Courage to practise it. If they are under any Obligation of exercising any Acts of Devotion, one plainly sees by their negligent and careless Manner of performing them, that they are out of their Element, and that such Employments are a Sort of Force upon their Natures. Now all this proceeds from the Want of that Fervour of Spirit which I have mentioned; their minds are not fixed upon God. From whence you must needs judge  
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of the Importance of this Temper of Soul, and cannot but desire to know how it may be acquired, and how those who are so happy as to enjoy it, may still preserve it.

In order to this Purpose, I shall offer to you some Considerations which I beg you to make Trial of, as necessary Means to keep this holy Fire bright in your Minds.

1. The *Exercise of God's Presence*. When a Soldier engages the Enemy in the Presence of his Prince, he fights with greater Courage and Bravery. When a Christian prays, converses, or follows his Calling, with an actual Sense that God sees him, and is privy to all his Thoughts, it is impossible he should be negligent or unconcerned. No; the Sense of God's all-seeing Eye animates him with Care and Diligence, and with this Prospect he endeavours to do every Thing that may please Him best. If you would be secure of a general and effectual Means to pray with Devotion, to converse with Reserve, to follow your Profession with Diligence, and to govern your Passions, and to resist the Temptations that assault you; remember always, that God is present with you; endeavour to preserve the Sense of it upon your Mind, and accustom yourself to the Exercise of it. And if, when you have any Occasion offered of practising any Virtue, or mortifying any Passion, you have not a Sense of God's Presence, upon your Mind, immediately reflect upon it, and place

place God before you, and you will quickly experience that Fervour of Spirit; and that Readiness of Mind, to serve God upon all Occasions, which is so important in our spiritual Life.

- II. *In the ordinary Actions of your Life, and in the Occasions of practising any Virtue, or avoiding any Sin;* 1. *Consider what God requires from you.* 2. *Promise to perform it.* 3. *Put your Resolution in Execution without Delay.* Now all this may be done almost in a Moment of Time, and you must immediately, without putting off, set about this Practice. First then, I recommend to you to consider in all your Actions, and in those Occasions I have mentioned, what it is God requires from you, and what is most pleasing in his Sight. Alas! how much are you to blame when you act with Rashness and Precipitation; when you pass Hours and whole Days in different Actions, which succeed one another, without considering what it is God requires from you, without consulting his Will and Pleasure, in order that the Action and the Manner of it, may be such as He shall approve of? Let the Example of holy *David* prevail upon you, for the future, to set the Lord always before you. From Time to Time lift up your Heart to him, whose Eyes run to and fro throughout all the Earth; and say to Him, *Lord what wouldst thou have me to do? Speak, Lord, for thy Servant heareth.*

*heareth.* In the *second* Place, having thoroughly understood your Duty, and the Manner of performing it; that upon such an Occasion Patience ought to be exercised; that we ought not to fix our Eyes upon such an Object; and that we ought always to pray with Reverence and Attention, &c. Upon such Convictions, we ought immediately to resolve to practise what appears to us most acceptable to God: And then, in the *third* Place, we must, without Delay, put in Execution what we have resolved. O! how important is this Advice! Do not rest in the bare Knowledge of your Duty; do not satisfy yourself with some faint Resolutions of practising it; but without losing any farther Time, perform what you have promised, and practise what you have resolved.

If it is an Opportunity of doing any Good, this Opportunity will quickly pass through your Hands; and if you do not take Care you will let it slip, and be apt to say, as many other negligent Christians do, *I will do this Good upon another Occasion.* But alas! we ought not after this Manner to abuse the Grace of God, and to squander away those Opportunities He gives us for our Improvement. The Proverb says, *We must strike the Iron while it is hot, and take Time by the Forelock.*

You are very well acquainted with your Duty in this Particular, and you are engaged  
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to perform it; why then, alas! do you defer it? This Opportunity will never come again, and Time slides away; your good Inclinations may decrease, and your Zeal may abate; nay, the Grace of God may be withdrawn, if you do not make a present Use of it.

If the Occasion relates to any Sin, it is still more dangerous, after knowing it, and resolving to avoid it, to stand still and do nothing. In such Circumstances let no Time be lost; you have, it may be, entered upon a Discourse that reflects upon your Neighbour; break it off immediately. You have resolved not to look upon such an Object, do not amuse yourself in thinking of it, and dispute no longer with yourself, whether you shall look upon it or no. And in the same Manner put in Execution the other Resolves you have made. The longer you defer in such Cases, the greater Danger and Hazard you run: For the Resolution being **not** at first put in Practice, by Degrees the Strength of it declines; the Charms of the Object appear more tempting, the Pleasure of it begins to creep into your Heart; so that the Temptation grows stronger, your Appetites rebel, and your Purposes stagger, and you are surprised to find yourself in so little Time upon the Brink of Ruin. Now whence does all this proceed? Why purely from deferring to practise your good Resolutions, from delay-  
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ing immediately to resist the Temptation that attacks you.

III. *Religious Meditation.* It is found true in Experience, that they who apply themselves to this Method are most zealous and fervent in the Discharge of their Duty, most faithful to God in the Day of Trial and Temptation, and most ready to embrace all Opportunities of doing Good. Now whence does this proceed? The Truth is, their Minds being so frequently employed in meditating upon divine Subjects, in considering the Importance of everlasting Salvation, the Advantages of Christian Perfection, the Folly of Sin, and the Wisdom of being Religious; these Thoughts, which they have entertained themselves with, easily return into their Minds; and they find their Hearts more warmed with the same Fervours they experienced during their Exercises of Devotion. They then call to Mind those great Truths which formerly have made so deep an Impression in their Souls, which serve them as a Bridle to restrain them from Evil, and as Motives to animate them to every Thing that is Good, and as a sovereign Preservative against all the Attacks of their spiritual Enemies; which ought to make you sensible of the great Advantage of religious Meditation, in order to make you zealous in the Service of God, and to keep your Minds firmly bent to please Him to the utmost of your Power.

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Farther;

Farther; If you would keep a lively Sense of God upon your Minds, frequent the Prayers of the Church, and never neglect the Performance of them upon all Occasions in your Family; accustom yourself to divine Ejaculations, or Breathings towards Heaven. All these Instances of Devotion are so many Helps to keep the holy Flame bright in your Minds, which otherwise might decay, and by Degrees go out: For you may assure yourself, that it is very difficult; amidst that Variety of Business and Diversion which happens during the Day, to preserve that Fervour and Zeal which our Morning Meditations kindle in our Souls. Some forbidden Pleasure will be apt to steal into our Hearts; a Fit of Anger, or any other Passion, it is possible, may ruffle us; and the Variety of Objects may dissipate and distract our Minds, and impair the Vigour of those Resolutions we made in the Morning. We must therefore feed this Flame, and fortify it against those Storms of the World it is always exposed to; which cannot be better effected, than by embracing all Opportunities of Conversing with God by Prayer.

It is with this Prospect we should enter into the Courts of the Lord; and our Prayers should partake of the Nature of Fire, which should warm and kindle Devotion in our Minds, and make us willing and zealous to serve God to the utmost of our Power. And then,

then, when we go out of God's Presence, it will be with lower Thoughts of all the Enjoyments of this Life, and with a greater Relish of Piety and Holiness, and with more eager Desires of being made such as he may love and approve of. We shall then find our Courage and Resolution increase, and desire nothing more than to be made perfect in Love.

IV. *Make frequent Acts of Mortification, of Patience, of Humility, or of any other Virtue.* It is possible that you may not be aware how this Direction can tend to the preserving that Fervour of Mind which is recommended; but let me advise you only to practise it, and then Experience will thoroughly convince you of the Truth of it. The great Advantage of it is, that by thus corresponding to the Grace of God, you engage Him to increase his Favours towards you, whereby you will become still more disposed to obey Him in every Thing. Besides, these Acts of Virtue, frequently repeated from Time to Time, quicken and awaken our benumbed Minds, and animate them with fresh Vigour and Strength. The Pains you take in practising these Virtues, and the Victory you get over yourself upon these Occasions, put you in Mind of that good God, whose Grace has enabled you; and one Victory gives you new Courage to undertake another, and thereby proceeds Matter for fresh Triumph.

The faithful and constant Practice of these Means, and a stedfast Purpose of pursuing your Perfection, will not fail of meeting with the desired Success; for this Fervour of Mind, this constant Disposition of Soul to serve God to the utmost of our Power, consists in constantly aiming at being perfect as God is perfect, and in desiring above all Things to please Him.

THE  
PRACTICE OF TRUE DEVOTION,  
IN RELATION TO THE  
MEANS  
OF  
*RELIGION.*

CHAP. XIII.

*General Reflections upon that Devotion that  
relates to the Means of Religion.*

It is not my Design to press you to the daily Observation of all those Means the Christian Religion enjoins for our Growth in Grace: Some of them have their stated Seasons, and the Enjoyment of them depends upon others doing their Duty; besides, the Affairs and Business of the World challenge a Part of our Time; so that it is not expected that we should every Day go through them all. What I desire of you is, that after hav-

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ing perused them all, and having informed yourself in the Nature of them, you take Care to make use of them upon all convenient Opportunities, and always with that Prospect and Design for which they were enjoined. The Main of Religion must not be placed in them, but they must be used as Helps to make us pious and virtuous; and if we do not use them for this Purpose, they are altogether insignificant and useles. Before I come to the particular Enumeration of them, I desire you to make some important Reflections upon them in general.

I. *Their Usefulness.* There is no attaining the End, without the Practice of those Means that lead to it; a Man may as well pretend to be learned without Study, and Rich without Industry, as Pious and Virtuous without observing that Method God has enjoined for becoming so. Besides, considering the Weakness and Impotency of our Nature, we are not of ourselves able to do any Thing that is Good; there is a Law in our Members warring against the Law of our Minds, and all our Sufficiency is from God: Now the Means of Religion are established, on Purpose for the Conveyance of that Grace and Assistance, which is necessary to enable us to perform our Duty; so that he who neglects the Use or the Means, forfeits his Share of that supernatural Strength without which his Endeavours will prove ineffectual. The great Happiness

Happiness a Christian aims at in the next Life, is the enjoyment of God, which a Man must be qualified for a by a pious and virtuous Disposition of Mind in this Life; and in order to acquire this happy Frame and Temper of Soul, he must frequently pray to God for his Grace to effect it: He must take all Occasions of approaching the Altar, that he may be nourished with all Goodness; he must attentively read his Word, that he may be thoroughly instructed in all the Particulars of his Duty, &c. Never complain that the Discipline of Religion is burthensome; that the constant Practice of the Means lays a Restraint upon our Liberty; if it were much more so, the Necessity of them, in order to our Happiness, should more influence a wise Man, than any Difficulty that attends them: The great Advantages we receive from them, should be sufficient to oblige us to practise them.

II. *The Abuse of them.* Never deceive yourself, as too many ignorant Christians are apt to do, who falsely persuade themselves that their Salvation is secure, though their Lives are stained with many scandalous Vices, because they constantly practise those Means that are enjoined for the working out their Salvation; they go to Church, they pray, they hear Sermons, and receive the holy Sacrament: Such an Abuse will as certainly destroy thee, as it has already ruined many a Thousand.

Remember always, that the Goodness of the Means must be estimated by their Serviceableness to the End; they are never enjoined for their own Sake, but in order to conduct us to the End proposed; so that he who resists in them, and allows himself at the same Time, in any known Iniquity, endeavours to impose upon God, and betrays his own Soul.

He that pretends to the Perfection of true Piety without the Use of Means, is presumptuous; and he that places all Religion in such Performances, is weak and foolish. We must use the Means, because God has enjoined them, and our own Weakness has made them necessary; and at the same Time we must carefully avoid every Thing that is Evil: And if we are so unfortunate as upon any Occasion to transgress our Duty, we must not despair of the Goodness of God, who, for the Sake of our Saviour's Sufferings, is ready to receive us upon our sincere Repentance, and to enable us by his Grace to resist the Temptation for the Time to come.

III. *The Attention with which they ought to be performed.* We must not only use the Means prescribed, but in such a Way and Manner, that they may become most effectual. They must have very odd Notions of the Deity, who think to please Him by drawing nigh to Him with their Lips, when their Hearts are far from Him. To multiply Prayers and Sacraments, without Attention,  
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without minding what we are about, is mere Lip Labour, and looks as if we thought God were to be reconciled to us by the Number of our Prayers, more than by the Dispositions of those that offer them: Besides, such Sorts of Devotion have as little Effect upon ourselves, as they have upon God; it not being likely that we should take much Pains to become what we ask to be made, when we never attend to what we ask. Exercise therefore the Means of Grace with great Seriousness, as in the Presence of the great God of Heaven and Earth; and that he may be willing to grant thy Petitions, attend to them thyself; let them be offered with thy Heart, as well as thy Mouth; and then, as God will be ready to bestow what thou desirest, so thou thyself wilt be zealous in all thy Actions to obtain it.

IV. *Use the Means with Faith.* When we have performed those Conditions upon which God is pleased to dispense his Favours, we ought to rest assured that He will not fail to bestow them upon us; which is using the Means of Religion with Faith. It is through the Defect of this Trust and Confidence in God, that sometimes our Prayers become ineffectual: the Addresses that we make to any one are but languid and faint, when we have no Assurance of his Power and Readiness to assist us. Provided we sincerely perform our Part, what may we not expect from the Power and Goodness of God, who is al-

ways ready and willing to communicate himself to such who are qualified to receive the Effects of his Goodness? What can He deny us, who has given his only begotten Son to die for our Redemption? What may we not hope for from the inexpressible Love of the blessed Jesus, who condescended to take our frail Nature upon Him, that we might be Partakers of the divine Nature? What Strength and Assistance may we not receive from the holy Spirit, who bestowed such miraculous Gifts and Graces upon the Apostles to fit them to convert the World; and who has in all Ages supplied the Wants of faithful and sincere Christians? The Experience of the admirable Effects that have attended a serious and devout Application to the holy Trinity, both in Life and in the Hour of Death, should stir us up to put our Trust and Confidence in the Mercy and Goodness of God.

V. *Constancy and Perseverance.* Never grow faint and weary of what conduces so much to your eternal Happiness. Some set out with great Zeal and Fervour in the Practice of the Means of Grace; they begin with Chearfulness, and are sometimes supported with the Novelty of such Performances: But when the same Prayers, and the same Devotions frequently occur, by Degrees they grow careless and negligent, and are perfectly tired with the frequent Repetition of them. Now we must always remember, that  
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the Pains and Labours we take in the Service of God, that the Care we take in discharging the Exercise of Piety, will not lose its Reward in the next World, and is of great Use and Advantage to us in our Pilgrimage here upon Earth. The more Difficulties we contend with at present, if we overcome them, the greater is our Virtue, and the brighter will be our Crown. Never dispense with the Neglect of your stated Hours of Devotion, with the Omission of the appointed Seasons of Public Worship, and of approaching the holy Table, except in Cases of absolute Necessity: Let no Reluctance or Weariness discourage you; let not the Raillery and Contempt of bad Men laugh you out of your Duty: but let all such Opportunities be cheerfully embraced, as the best Helps to strengthen us in our Christian Warfare, and to make the Man of God perfect.

## CHAP. XIV.

## FOR SUNDAY.

*Prayer.*

ONE of the great Instruments of Religion is *Prayer*, whereby we address ourselves to God for the Relief of all our Wants and Necessities, both Temporal and Spiritual: We are commanded to ask, in order to receive: and a Man must have but little Sense of those good Things which God daily bestows upon him, that refuses to give him the Tribute of a thankful Heart; he must have but slight Notions of his own Weakness, and Impotency, that does not seek for Help from above. Now Prayer is of admirable Efficacy,

1. When *we are cold and languid*. It is by this Means that our Understandings are filled with heavenly Light, that our Wills are disposed to choose and embrace that which is Good, that our Affections are inflamed with the Love of God, and that our Hearts are taken off from the Creatures, and fixed upon the Creator. Prayer is as Fire, to which we must approach when we find we begin to wax cold, and then we shall perceive a gentle Warmth insensibly overspread us, and by Degrees it will rise into a Flame, which will

consume every Thing that opposes our true Interest, and animate us to give up ourselves entirely to the Conduct and Guidance of God's Holy Spirit. *While I was thus musing the Fire kindled, saith David.*

2. When *we run astray*. It is very difficult among those various Actions in which we are daily engaged, among those Multitudes of Affairs which continually surround us, and those Temptations which perpetually solicit us, not sometimes to transgress our Duty; and at best not to have our Minds wander from their true Center. Now what so proper to recover us from any wrong Step we have made, as the Sense of the Greatness and Majesty of God, whom we have offended? What more likely to restore Peace and Quiet to our Minds, than a Sense of his infinite Goodness through *Jesus Christ*? What can so soon and so easily recollect our dissipated Minds, as fixing them upon a Being of infinite Perfection, the true Center of all our Happiness? If bad Men are so monstrously wicked, and good Men so imperfectly righteous, whence can it proceed, but from the Neglect of frequent Application to God by Prayer? Sin and Vice get daily Ground upon Men, when God is not in all their Thoughts.

3. When *we are under any Necessity*. If you are pressed with any Temporal or Spiritual Want, let Prayer be your Refuge; for

it is by the Means of Application to God that you will be relieved: If Temptations solicit you, if Afflictions oppress you, if you labour under any Necessity, seek for Redress by Prayer. If your Addresses to God are managed with those Qualifications that are required, with Reverence and Attention, with Fervour and Constancy, and with an entire Trust in his Goodness, they will not fail to meet with Success. *You ask, and have not, because you ask amiss.* The Power, Dexterity and Art of Man, can never prevail so much as the constant Prayer of a Good Man; this has a Force to which all other Means must submit.

As to the Practice of this Duty;

I. Let *your Hours of Prayer be regulated.* Considering the other Circumstances of your Life, allot that Share of Time you can allow to this Exercise of Devotion, and be constant in your Observation of such appointed Times. Never begin the Day without entering into your Closet, and addressing yourself to the great Creator of Heaven and Earth; and never retire to your Rest, without commending yourself to his Protection. If you are a Master of a Family, let Morning and Evening Prayer have their stated Hours, that the Family may so order their Affairs as not to be absent: This is the best Method to keep up a Sense of Religion among your Children and Servants, without which other Measures will

will prove ineffectual. As often as you conveniently can, frequent the public Prayers of the Church, which as they are most acceptable to God, so they bring the most Profit and Advantage to us: This Exercise of our Devotion is the proper Business of *Sundays*, and therefore we must charge ourselves with it as Matter of Duty, to be present in the public Assemblies upon such Occasions; no slight trivial Excuse should be admitted to prevent our Attendance in God's House; and the Flame of Piety must burn very dimly, if we can omit such Occasions without Concern, or enjoy them without Pleasure and Satisfaction. We should likewise endeavour so to order our worldly Affairs, as to frequent the public Worship on *Holy Days*.

II. Accustom *yourself to pious Ejaculations*. These short Breathings of the Soul towards God are very useful to preserve in us a devout Frame and Temper of Mind; they keep our Affections warm, and make us ready and zealous to embrace all Opportunities of doing Good. For this Purpose, we neither want a Church nor a Closet; but at our Work; at our Study, at our Business, nay, even in Conversation, we may exercise this Sort of Devotion. We should always remember, that we are in the Presence of God; that our most secret Actions are exposed to his View: For this Sense of God's Presence will have a great Influence upon the Conduct.

Conduct of our Lives, in restraining us from Sin, in fortifying us against Temptations, and in animating us with a holy Zeal in all our Actions. These Ejaculations are particularly of use when any Temptation assaults us: *Lord, let not the Enemy prevail against me; be thou my Strength and Support in this Hour of Trial:* When any Affliction happens to us; *It comes, O Lord, from thy Hand; therefore I will receive it with Patience and Submission, and I will wait thy Time for my Deliverance:* When we fall into any Sin: *Miserable Wretch that I am, to offend so good a God; Pardon for Christ's Sake, O Lord, this my Folly, and enable me to avoid it for the Time to come:* When we are delivered from any Danger; *Thy Power and thy Might have preserved me: I will sing of thy Goodness as long as I live.* When we receive any Blessing; *I owe this Merit, O Lord, to Thee, who art the Fountain of all Goodness, and I will express my Gratitude by serving Thee faithfully all the Days of my Life:* When Business and Conversation have dissipated our Minds; *Let not the Affairs and Pleasures of Life fill my Head; but let the Thoughts of Thee delight my Soul.* There is no great Time required for these Aspirations of the Soul towards God; a Cast of the Eye, a Gesture, a Sigh, one Word sometimes may be sufficient to testify to God the Bottom of our Hearts, and express the Desire we have to please Him.

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III. *Set apart some Day peculiarly for spiritual Exercises.* If we observe *Friday*, the Weekly Fast of the Church, no Day can be more proper to enlarge our Devotions upon than that; because the Memory of our Saviour's Crucifixion supplies us with many Arguments to make us serious and devout: At such Times it will be very fit to examine the Actions of the Week past, and to compare them with the Rule of our Duty; that where we find we have transgressed, we may repair those Breaches by Repentance, and beg God's Grace to preserve us for the future. Most serious Christians set some Time apart for Prayer before their Approach to the holy Sacrament; which has this Advantage, that it strengthens their Resolutions, and inflames their Affections, and raises their Minds above the trifling Concerns of Life: It is very proper thus to trim our Lamp, when we go to meet the Beloved of our Souls. But still we must not impose any Method of that Kind so necessarily upon ourselves, as to neglect any Opportunity of Communicating when we are prevented in going through with it. Times of Affliction are best spent in our Closets; it is the Apostle's Rule, *that if any be afflicted, let him Pray*: Such fervent Intercourses with God, will procure us that Comfort which the World cannot give: When any violent Temptation continues to persecute us, how can we so effectually find Strength to resist it, as by  
praying

praying earnestly to God that it may not prevail against us? This Advice of setting apart sometimes a Day for Devotion, cannot be observed equally by all: Those that have the Command of Time cannot better employ it: Those that are confined to Shops and Trades, must make themselves amends by frequent Ejaculations in the Midst of their Business, and by being constant to their Morning and Evening Devotions in their Closets, and in their Families.

IV. *Attention and Fervour.* Our Thoughts must be so intent upon our Prayers, as to engage our Hearts, as well as our Lips, in God's Service: We must ask with so much Importunity and Fervour of Affection, as to shew we are desirous of the Blessings we beg, and that we value and esteem what we ask for. You must avoid, as much as possible, all wandering Thoughts, and recall your Mind as soon as you find it run astray; never be discouraged if you cannot entirely overcome them; but still thrive against them, and bewail your own Weakness, and this in Time will make you more composed: We must never willingly entertain them, nor indulge ourselves in thinking upon other Objects without Restraint; we must keep our Passions, as much as we can, under Government, that none of them may prevail so far as to distract us; and, above all, you must fix in your Minds an awful Sense of God's Presence, which

which will compose your tumultuous Affections, stir up your flat and cold Desires, and engage all the Powers and Faculties of your Souls in his Service.

V. *Respect and Reverence.* The modest Behaviour and Deportment of the Body, contributes very much to the Desire and Attention of the Mind. The Greatness and Majesty of God, to whom you speak, and the Quality of a Suppliant, which belongs to you when you pray, ought to inspire you with great Reverence and profound Respect, and ought to oblige you to make use of such an humble Posture, as may be proper not only to excite Devotion in ourselves, but to have the same Influence on those that behold you. And if you pray upon your Knees, with your Eyes fixed down, and your Hands joined together, it is much more likely to have this Effect, than if you stand up, and give yourself the Liberty of gazing about; which does but distract and dissipate your own Mind, and dispose your Neighbour to the same Carelessness and Negligence.

Whenever your Prayers are vocal, never pronounce your Words with Haste and Precipitation: What Reason is there you should be in such Haste? Are you tired with the great Honour you have of addressing yourself to God, and therefore endeavour to get out of his Presence as soon as you can? Or do you run over your Prayers in such a  
Hurry,

Hurry, that you may the sooner have Leisure for your worldly Employment? Alas! Can any Employment be of greater Importance to us than our Addresses to God? And should any Thing animate us, and revive us more, than the Liberty of approaching the Throne of Grace? Besides, when we speak so fast in our Prayers, and hurry ourselves after that Rate, we cannot have Leisure to think of what we say: This makes our Devotion look more like a Task, which we are obliged to go over, than a Piece of Worship to God, in which we should be always serious and composed. It is no Wonder that we return from such Prayers with as little Relish of Piety and Devotion, as when we first set about them; because neither our Hearts nor our Heads are much affected by them.

VI. *Union with God.* It is this Union of Thought and Affection with God, that the devout Christian ought to aspire after. You ought to be so disengaged from the Love of the Creatures, that the great Bent and Inclination of your Soul may be towards God. If you make any Progress in this Union, it will certainly have this Effect; it will make you think less of the Creatures, that you may have more Leisure to fix your Thoughts on God; the happy or unhappy Accidents of Life will have but little Influence upon you, because you put your whole Trust and Confidence in God, and make Him the  
Center

**C**enter of your Happiness. The Hours of Prayer will become pleasant and delightful, because your chief Satisfaction will consist in Communion with God. Your mind will be then more intent upon God in your Prayers, and in your Actions; and during the Business of the Day, you will find your Soul attracted to Him, and inflamed with divine Love: In short, you will have a particular Joy and Pleasure, whenever any Occasion offers itself of doing or suffering any Thing for the Sake of Him to whom you have given your Heart, and with whom you desire to be most intimately united. You must unavoidably be sensible of the Happiness of such a State and Condition, which ought to excite you earnestly to contend for it: I shall content myself at present to hint at those Things which tend to hinder this happy Union, that you may lay them aside, and get rid of them.

1. Too great an Engagement in worldly Affairs, and being overwhelmed by a Multitude of Employments.

2. Too great a Passion and Concern for any Thing whatsoever; an Object that we love or hate extremely, will frequently present itself to us, and interrupt our Attention.

3. Too great an exerting ourselves in reference to outward Things, over-much speaking, too great Curiosity in seeing and hearing every Thing that passes.

4. Want

4. Want of Care, in avoiding little Faults. All these Things hinder our Union with God, and prevent that divine Relish we should otherwise find in our Devotions. For ordinarily we are such in our Prayers, as we approve ourselves in the Course and Conduct of our Lives.

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## CHAP. XV.

### FOR MONDAY.

#### *Reading the Holy Scriptures, and other Books of Piety.*

THAT *the Soul should be without Knowledge*, the wise Man tells us, *is not good*. Now how is this to be attained, but by searching into those Fountains, from whence it flows? In order to the regular Practice of our Duty, it is necessary our Minds should be acquainted with the true Principles of Religion and Virtue, which are laid down in the holy Scriptures, and farther explained and enforced by the judicious Writings of wise and good Men; so that they who neglect to apply themselves seriously to acquire necessary Knowledge, render themselves incapable of discharging

discharging their Duty both to God and Man. The Goodness of God has manifested itself to us in so large a Measure, that we are not abandoned to the dim Light of our own Reason; but he has given us his holy Word to guide and direct us in the Path that leads to everlasting Life: these Revelations contain what is necessary for us to believe and practise, and therefore we are obliged to learn and digest them. This appears,

1. From *the Nature and Design of them.* The great End and Design of writing the holy Scriptures, was to instruct Man in the Knowledge of true Religion, and to persuade and engage him to the Practice of it. *Whatever Things were written aforetime, were written for our Learning and our Admonition, that we might earnestly contend for the Faith once delivered to the Saints.* But how can the Writing of it contribute to these Ends, if we do not seriously and frequently peruse them? How should our Minds be informed in the Nature of that Salvation which is purchased for us, if we do not acquaint ourselves with what is revealed concerning it? How can we be stirred up to Remembrance, if we do not read what it suggests to our Memory? How can we be preserved from offending God but by Motives and Persuasions? But how can Motives and Persuasions effect our Minds, if we do not consult and understand them? How can we contend for the Faith once delivered

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*delivered to the Saints*, if we do not learn from the Scriptures what that Faith is, and what those Reasons are which oblige us to contend for it? All other Discourses of Piety, composed by devout and judicious Men, have the same End in their View, to enlighten our Understandings with the Discovery of our Duty, and to inflame our Affections with the Love of it. But in order to make them effectual, we must seriously consider them, and diligently read them; the best Arguments can have no Influence upon us, till we weigh their Force; and are convinced of the Goodness of them; the strongest Motives can never affect us, except we attend to them.

2. From *the Dignity and Excellency of them*.

Nothing can have greater Authority than those Things which come from God: And when he is pleased to speak, nothing can more raise the Worth of what is spoken. It is a great Perverseness in our Nature, that we should be so apt to resign our Understandings to Men, who though they may have great Parts, are yet fallible; and at the same Time to shew any Backwardness to rely and depend upon what God affirms, who is Goodness and Truth itself. And when we receive the Dictates of our Superiors here upon Earth with Awe and Respect, surely we should not slight and neglect the Oracles of God, the great King of all the World. Besides, this  
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divine Authority of the Scriptures is accompanied with infinite Wisdom, which assures us of the Fitness of all those Means which are prescribed in order to our Happiness; with infinite Truth, which is a Guard against Deceit and Imposture; with infinite Goodness and Kindness to us, which should convince us of the Importance of what is enjoined: And yet these holy Writings do not only recommend themselves to us by their Authority, but by the Excellency of the Matter they treat about; the Knowledge of God, and his Attributes, and the various Manifestations of himself to Mankind; the Way and Manner of paying Him our most acceptable Services, and the Means of attaining those everlasting Rewards He has been pleased to promise: And if those Motives will not prevail upon us to read and consider, we must be very stupid and negligent in relation to that which is of the greatest Concernment to us.

3. *From the dreadful consequences of neglecting them.* Many Things we may be ignorant of without Blame, and consequently without Guilt. It is no Reflection upon us, if we do not understand the Principles of Philosophy, nor the Problems of the Mathematicians, when we make neither of those Studies our Profession; but when we own ourselves Christians, not to know the Will and Pleasure of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, is an un-

pardonable Neglect. This Matter is 'not indifferent in itself, neither is it left to us to choose or refuse it; but since the Christian Law is sufficiently promulged, we cannot be ignorant of it without the utmost Hazard and Danger to ourselves. In the Scriptures are the Words of eternal Life, which is not to be attained without the Knowledge and Practice of them: In the Scriptures are the Threatenings of eternal Death, which is not to be avoided without observing that Method our Saviour has prescribed to free us from it: So that if we neglect to inform ourselves in those necessary Truths that are offered to us, our Condemnation will be unavoidable, because our Ignorance can have no justifiable Excuse.

That the Reading the holy Scriptures may turn to your Benefit and Advantage;

I. Read *with an entire Submission of your Understanding to what God reveals*. Being satisfied once that the Revelation comes from God, you ought readily to embrace what he proposes for the Object of your Faith. We must not interpret Scripture by our preposited Opinions, but govern all our Notions by that Manifestation God has made of his Will. You must remember, that God is incomprehensible in his own Nature; that his Perfections are infinite, and therefore above our Reach; and though our Faculties are not able to comprehend his divine Perfections,  
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yet we have all imaginable Reason to believe them, because natural Light acknowledges the divine Nature to be incomprehensible; and therefore, we have no Reason to reject any Doctrine God reveals, though very mysterious, and the Manner of it incomprehensible. It certainly best becomes finite creatures, as Men are, firmly to believe the Dictates of infinite Wisdom, though they do not comprehend the Manner of the Things revealed, which are the Objects of our Faith. It is sufficient, that the Christian Mysteries may be proved by the Testimonies of holy Writ, and that the Catholic Church has always believed them in the Sense we understand them. They who are removed from this Foundation, are always liable to be exposed to dangerous Errors.

II. With a *sincere Desire of practising what you know to be the Will of God.* The holy Scriptures were not writ only to fill our Heads, but to warm our Hearts; not only to give us a right Notion of God and ourselves, but to be a Rule and Guide to the Conduct of our Lives. *He that knows his Master's Will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many Stripes.* This honest Simplicity of Heart, is the good Ground, where the divine Instructions thrive and prosper; and Christ has assured us himself, *That he that doth God's Will, shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God.* This Sanctification of

our Wills and Affections, fits and prepares us for greater Degrees of divine Illumination: *A good Understanding have all they that do his Commandments.* This Temper of Mind answers the Ends for which the holy Scriptures were designed; for though it is necessary to know the Way and Manner of appeasing the Wrath of God, upon which Account, the Gospel is called the *Word of Reconciliation*; yet except we conform ourselves to the Method prescribed, we shall never partake of the Virtue of the all-sufficient Sacrifice; we must sincerely purpose to perform the Conditions, if ever we expect to reap the Fruits and Benefits of the Gospel. God's Threatenings should deter us from Sin, and his promises stir us up to holy Obedience. The Lives recorded in Scripture of God's faithful Servants, should excite us to imitate their Virtues, and all his Precepts should direct our Lives. It is better not to have known the Way of Righteousness, than when we have known it to neglect and despise it.

III. *Begin the Assistance of God's Holy Spirit.*

It is to that blessed Spirit that we owe the Scriptures themselves; for holy Men of God spake as they were inspired; and it must be from the Influence of the same Spirit, that they become effectual to our Salvation. It is his Property to work upon our Hearts, whereby we perceive and know those Things which we ought to do, and have Power and  
Strength

Strength faithfully to fulfil the same. This was *David's Practice*; *Open my Eyes, O Lord, that I may see the wondrous Things of thy Law.* And if ever we design to read with Profit, we must copy after so great an Example; and upon this Occasion, we may very properly make use of that admirable Collect of the Church; *Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our Learning, grant that I may in such wise read them, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by Patience and Comfort of thy holy Word, I may embrace, and ever hold fast the blessed Hope of everlasting Life, which thou hast given me in my Saviour Jesus Christ.* Amen.

IV. *Read the Scriptures with particular Attention.* Men miserably impose upon themselves, when they think they have discharged their Duty by reading so many Chapters; when, alas! the main Matter consists in such a comprehension of the Sense of them, as may Influence our Lives, and dispose us to practise what is contained in them. We can never receive any Profit from any human Writings, except, we keep our Understandings close to the Sense of them; but to read the Scriptures carelessly and negligently, is dangerous and sinful. To fix our Attention we must consider Who it is that speaks to us; the great Majesty of Heaven and Earth; and the Importance of those Things that are revealed, which concern no less than our eter-

nal Happiness or Misery. Were such Thoughts thoroughly impressed upon our Minds, it is impossible we should suffer them to wander upon other Objects; such Authority requires our particular Regard, and Matters of such great Moment justly challenge the utmost Intention of our Souls. If any earthly Prince condescends to discourse with us, we affront his Dignity by not listening to what he delivers; but how much greater an Affront is it to God, to whom the greatest Things bear so little Proportion, to receive the Words of his Instruction after a careless and negligent Manner? *Pardon, O Lord, that little Regard that I have hitherto paid to the Manifestation of thy Will; for the Time to come, I will attend with the greatest Seriousness to what thou deliverest. Speak, Lord, for thy Servant heareth.*

V. *Read with Reverence.* The Heathen Oracles were always consulted with great Ceremony and Solemnity, and shall we pay less Deference to the Oracles of the true God? When we take the Holy Bible into our Hands, we should raise our Minds to the greatest Value and Esteem imaginable of what is contained in it. For they are not the Words of human Wisdom; they are not the Words of human Reason; but they descend from Above, from the Father of Lights, with whom is no Variableness or Shadow of changing. If we had an habitual Reverence  
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of God upon our Minds, we should never read his Word only by Custom or Diversion: But yet this habitual Reverence must be actually excited by proper Considerations; for according to our Value and Esteem of any Thing, will our Endeavours rise towards the attaining thereof.

VI. Apply *what you read to your own Soul.* The frequent Calls to Repentance so often addressed by St. *John* Baptist, by our Saviour himself and his Apostles, to the Generation to which they preached, were intended to awaken us to Sorrow and Shame for those Sins we have committed, and to stir us up to hate and forsake them; for except we repent we shall certainly perish. It will little avail us to know that black Catalogue of Sins, which St. *Paul* assures the *Corinthians* would exclude them from the Kingdom of God, except we secure ourselves by Care and Diligence to avoid them: For any of those Crimes indulged, will as certainly shut Heaven's Gates against us, as it did against them to whom that Epistle is dedicated. The Promises and Threatenings of the Gospel equally concern us, as they did them to whom they were delivered; and therefore it is reasonable they should affect our Hopes and Fears as they did theirs. To read Scripture without this Application of it to the State of our own Minds, is to make it very insignificant to the great Purposes for which it was writ.

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VII. Use *some Paraphrase or Exposition to assist you in the Understanding of Scripture.* Any Book writ at that Distance from the Times we live in, as the Scriptures were, must have Relation to Customs with which we are unacquainted; must have Hints of Things then commonly known, but now out of Use: Upon this Account some short Notices of them will give us great Light in understanding several Things, that otherwise may appear obscure. Besides, when we know the Subject Matter beforehand of any of St. *Paul's* Epistles, and the End and Design for which he wrote it, we do the more easily enter into the Sense of it; and then several Phrases, which appear by themselves difficult, receive fresh Light from the Knowledge of what he proposed to treat of: To this End, it might be of great Use to have Contents to every Book of Scripture as we have to every Chapter: For from that general Idea of what is contained in the Book, we should be assisted to understand Particulars. For those who have not such Advantages, I would advise them, when they meet with Difficulties, to apply to their spiritual Guides, in order to have their Help and Assistance in the Understanding of them, and to take their particular Directions how to read with greatest Profit; always taking Care that they address to them, not out of vain Curiosity or any Inclination to cavil, but with  
a sincere

a sincere Desire of informing their Judgment, and rectifying their Practice.

VIII. Recollect *what most touches you after Reading.* It will be difficult to charge our Memories with every Particular: The Exhortations to Virtue are various, and the Discouragements from Vice are frequent; yet some noted Instances may always be retained, as the Subject of our Meditations in the several Occurrences and Busineses of Life. This may be preserved as a spiritual Nosegay, always ready to refresh our Minds. Sometimes we may charge our Memory with a particular Promise, that encourages our Perseverance in our Duty; and at another Time with a Threatening, that may deter us from complying with the Vanities and Follies of the Age. The Instances of God's blessing others in the Discharge of their Duty, may be retained as an Encouragement to ourselves; and those Marks of his Vengeance, with which he has chastised the Wicked, should be remembered, as proper to deter us from the Commission of any Thing that may displease him. By the frequent Practice of this, we shall be stocked with Variety of Armour, to resist the manifold Attacks of our spiritual Enemies, and we shall have a proper Remedy for every Temptation that assaults us. *That I may read to such admirable Purposes, strengthen, O Lord, my Memory, that I may always retain those Things that may most contribute to my Increase*

*in the Knowledge and Love of Thee ; that being conformed to the Image of my blessed Saviour here below, I may partake of his Glories in the World to come.*

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## CHAP. XVI.

FOR TUESDAY.

### *Meditation.*

IN a religious Sense, Meditation is such an Application of the Mind to the Consideration of any divine Subject, whether it be any Mystery of the Gospel Institution, or any Truth or Virtue of the Christian Religion, or any Part of our Saviour's Life or Death ; as may best dispose us firmly to believe and embrace it, and stir up all the Faculties of the Soul to a vigorous Prosecution of it. It consists in exciting holy Motions in our Souls, by Virtue of those good Thoughts we entertain and dwell upon : And indeed without this Practice, the Holy Scriptures and other devout Books, will have but little Effect upon us : For it is by this Method that we digest what we read, and turn it into the true Nourishment of our Minds.

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1. Meditation *impresses the Sense of our Duty upon our Minds.* Considering the Frailty of our Natures, and our daily Converse with sensual Objects, our Knowledge of divine Things would by degrees be impaired, if we did not refresh it by frequent Recollection. All the Motives that encourage our Obedience, and all the Punishments that are threatened against such as transgress God's holy Laws, by this Means become effectual to us.

2. It *keeps our Conscience tender, and afraid to offend.* In the Hurry and Noise of the World, we are too apt to neglect the Voice of Conscience, which, as a faithful Friend, is always ready to direct us in the right Way, and to admonish us when we deviate from it: But when we meditate seriously upon our Duty, it will be difficult to reject the Testimony it offers, either by approving what we have done conformable to the Will of God, or by severely reproaching us for those Neglects which we have been guilty of.

3. It *habituates our Minds to spiritual Objects.* The daily Necessities of our Bodies call for our constant Care and Application; and God has thought fit to make it our Duty to provide for them: But yet, it is not reasonable they should engross all our Time, and take up all the Vigour and Strength of our Minds. We have a better Part, infinitely more worth our Care, which, if ever

it attains the Happiness that is prepared for it, must converse with Spirits of God's heavenly Kingdom, and be qualified for spiritual Enjoyments: and therefore Meditation is proper to train us up for that holy Society we expect to converse with; and to make us familiar with such Objects as are out of Sight; and which, for that very Reason, might otherwise lose their Force and Influence upon us.

To make our Meditations useful to the best Purposes, we must observe this Method.

I. Prepare *your Minds for this Duty by imploring God's Assistance.* We must remember that God is present to all our Thoughts, and searcheth out all our Ways; that we are unworthy, by reason of our Sins, to present ourselves before him; and that we are unable, without his Assistance, to think any Thing that is good. *I firmly believe, O God, that thou art here, and every where present; that thy Being and thy Power is infinite: I adore Thee with all Humility as my Sovereign Lord, and acknowledge that I am unworthy to appear before thee, by reason of my many Infirmities and Follies: but for the Sake of the blessed Jesus be gracious unto me, and so enlighten my Understanding, and Influence my Will and Affections, that the present Action may tend to thy Glory, and the Good of my own Soul.*

II. Choose *the Subject of your Meditation.* I believe it adviseable, for the Generality of Christians

Christians that apply themselves to this Method, to read some certain Subject out of a pious good Book, which will furnish their Minds with proper Considerations for the Exercise of their Wills and Affections; there being few that are able to prosecute a Subject from themselves, and to strike all that Light which should convince and warm at the same Time.

III. Fix *your Minds upon such Considerations as are proper to your Subject*. If it relates to any Virtue or Vice, you must consider, 1. *Its Nature, its Object, and its Acts*. 2. *Its Qualities*, the Excellence or Baseness of it: the easiness or Difficulty, &c. of this Virtue or that Vice. 3. *The Opposite* to this Vice or Virtue. 4. *The Advantages* of this Virtue, or the Inconvenience of that Vice; in respect of God, yourself, and your Neighbour. 5. *The Recompence*, or Punishment, in this World and the next. 6. *The Reasons* for the practising this Virtue, and for avoiding that Vice. 7. *The Authority of Scripture* concerning this Vice or Virtue, and the Notions good Men entertain about it. 8. *The Example* of such as have practised it, or have avoided it, and what happened to them thereupon; it being probable, that the same Thing may be our Case. 9. *The Necessity* in general, and in our particular Actions, of practising this Virtue, or avoiding this Vice. 10. *The Means* of acquiring the  
Virtue,

Virtue, or of conquering the Vice. 11. *The Difficulties* that oppose the Practice of the Virtue. 12. *The Dangers* of falling into the Vice, and of those Things that lead to it.

If it relates to any Action, as suppose of our Saviour; we must consider, 1. *The Person* that performed it, and those that were present. 2. *The Dignity* of the Person. 3. *Upon whose Account* the Action was performed. 4. *The End* for which it was done. 5. *The Place* and Circumstance. 6. *The Fruits* and Effects of it.

If it relates to any Doctrine of the Gospel, we must consider, 1. *Its Truth*, because God revealed it. 2. *The Necessity* of believing it, because made a Condition of our Salvation. 3. *The Advantages* of it, in regard of God, our Neighbour, and ourselves. 4. *The ill Consequences* of the contrary in the same three Respects. 5. *The Motives* that enforce it. 6. *The Means* that help it.

It is not always necessary to make use of all these Considerations at one Time, neither to excite all the Affections that may be drawn from them; but some may be chose at one Time, and some at another.

IV. *The Understanding being convinced by Consideration, excite your Will and Affections to love and desire, or to hate and shun the Object.* Then Arguments have their due Influence upon us, when they stir up to practise what they represent as amiable and lovely; and  
when

when they put us upon avoiding what they convince us to be bad in itself, and prejudicial to our true Interest.

The Exercise of our Affections upon any Doctrine of Christian Virtue, consists, 1. *In believing* the Truth of it. 2. *In Thankfulness* for the Discovery of it. 3. *In Admiration* that we ourselves, or others, have so little considered the Importance of it, and have practised it so imperfectly. 4. *In Compassion* to those who are so unhappy as not to consider it, and neglect the Practice of it. 5. *In Sorrow* for having given it so small a Share in our Thoughts and Actions. 6. *In Humility and Confusion*, upon the same Account. 7. *In a Diffidence* of our own Strength, acknowledging our Weakness, that without the Grace of God, we can neither think nor do any Thing that is good. 8. *In a Confidence in God*, who is able to make us consider, and to give us Strength to perform it. 9. *In giving Praise to God*, if we have in any Measure performed our Duty, it being owing to his Assistance. 10. *In resolving* to practise it. 11. *In offering yourself to God*, to execute his Will and Pleasure, and to overcome all the Difficulties that oppose it. 12. *In begging the Assistance of God's Spirit* to enable you to hate every Thing that is Evil, and to follow that which is Good.

The *Affections* that relate to an *Action* are,

1. *Admiration* of the Greatness of the Action.

2. *Love*

2. *Love* of the Person who has performed it, especially if it was done upon our Account. 3. *Joy*, congratulating him that has done it, being touched with a Sense of those Favours and Privileges he has received. 4. *Thankfulness* to God for the Grace bestowed upon him. 5. *Desire* to imitate it. 6. *Diffidence* of ourselves. 7. *Trust in God*, by whose Grace you may be enabled to imitate it. 8. *Resolution* to imitate it. 9. *An Obligation* of yourself to God for that Purpose. 10. *Prayer to God* for his Assistance.

5. *The Considerations that relate to any Subject, and the Affections excited thereby, must be followed with Resolution.* This is the great Design of entertaining our Minds with spiritual Subjects, that by conversing with them we may be directed and excited to amend our Lives. When we have been convinced of the Reasonableness and Necessity of any Virtue, we must form a firm Purpose of Mind to practise it in our Lives and Conversation: When we are possessed with the Unreasonableness, and with the fatal Consequences of any Vice, we must resolve to shun and avoid it. When a divine Doctrine is sufficiently revealed, we must readily believe and embrace it. When we are acquainted with the great Things Jesus Christ has done for us, we must resolve to make him the Returns of our Gratitude and Obedience. This Resolution must, 1. *Extend* to all the *Particulars*

culars of our Duty, for they all equally oblige us. 2. *To all Times*, present as well as future, under Temptation, as well as when we are free from it. 3. *To the avoiding all Occasions* that betray us to the Breach of our Duty. 4. *To the Use of all Means* that help us to perform it; as Prayer and the frequent Receiving the Holy Sacrament.

VI. Conclude *your Meditation with a particular Address to God*; that he would be pleased to affect your Mind with a constant Sense of your Duty, in all the Particulars of it; chiefly that he would enable you to practise that Virtue, or to shun that Vice that you have been meditating upon; and that he would strengthen you in performing those Resolutions you have made of advancing in Piety and Virtue; that he would not leave you to yourself, nor to those Temptations that daily assault you; but that he would so continually assist you with his Grace, that you may continue his faithful Servant to your Life's End.

You will do very well to retain some particular Thought of your Meditation, as Matter for a pious Ejaculation, which you may frequently repeat in the several Intervals all the Day long.

## CHAP XVII.

FOR WEDNESDAY.

*EXAMINATION.*

AMONG all the Instruments of Religion, none seems to be of greater Use than the daily calling ourselves to a strict Account for all our Actions, comparing them with the Laws of God, the Rule and Measure of our Duty. It is of that Importance, that the greatest Parts of our spiritual Improvement seems to depend upon it; for our relapsing daily into the same Fault, and making no Advancement in Piety, chiefly proceeds from the Neglect of this Practice. Men do not well consider the Source of their vicious Inclinations, they do not entertain an Horror of their daily Sins, they do not reflect upon those fatal Occasions which are used to betray them to the Breach of God's Laws; neither do they make firm Purposes and effectual Resolutions of Amendment. Whereas, if we submitted ourselves to this Examination every Evening, it would be impossible that the Seeds of Vice should take any deep Root in our Hearts; neither would evil Habits be able to prevail upon us. To make us impartial in this Search, let us consider,

1. The

1. The *Presence of God*. It is true, his Throne of State is established above, and the Splendors of his Glory shine only on the Blessed : but yet his unlimited Eye looks down upon this lower World, and he beholds all the Ways of the Children of Men. If we are in Public, he marks our Steps ; if we retire, he is not excluded ; he is conscious of all the secret Contrivings of our Minds ; and though we may impose upon ourselves and others, yet nothing can be hid from his Omniscience. Since therefore our Faults cannot be concealed from God, let us not endeavour to be ignorant of them ourselves, but let us bring our most private Actions to the Test of his Laws, and impartially consider how much Evil we have been guilty of, and how little Good we have done, in comparison of what we might and ought to have done.

2. The *Voice of Conscience*. When Men are once well instructed in the Nature of that Duty which they owe to God, their Neighbour, and themselves ; if they will but seriously attend to the Judgment of their own Minds, they will easily be convinced of the several Sins they are guilty of ; so that they will never be able to recover the Peace of their own Minds, and silence the Reproaches of their Consciences, if they are not impartial in repenting of all those Sins that gave them any Trouble and Disquiet. Indeed Sins of Omission are not so apt to startle the  
Mind,

Mind, as Sins of Commission : These latter are apt to terrify us, and make us apprehensive of the Wrath of God ; whereas we easily find Salvo's to allay that Sense of Guilt that arises from the former : Though to awaken Men. our Saviour has declared, that the Inquiry of the great Day will turn chiefly upon the Neglects of our Duty.

3. The *dreadful Tribunal*. There is no Doctrine more clear and express, and fundamental, in the Word of God, than that of *eternal Judgment*. *We must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ*, saith St. Paul. And God has given Assurance unto all Men, that he will judge the World by Jesus Christ, in that he hath raised him from the Dead. Our Words and Actions, nay our very Thoughts, will be then exposed to public View, and we shall be tried for all we have done in the Body : Now an impartial Examination of ourselves at present, may help to abate the Terrors of that dreadful Trial, by tending to make our Peace with God, and to reconcile ourselves to him by a sincere Repentance ; for if we judge and condemn ourselves, the Sentence of Condemnation shall not pass upon us.

In the Practice of this Duty, we must,

I. Beg *God's Assistance*. Our Hearts are deceitful, and we are too much inclined to impose upon ourselves : Our Vileness and Sinfulness is great, and the Sight of it is a

and disturb us, which makes us too  
 o conceal it. Our sinful Passions  
 d delight us, which makes us loth to  
 them. And when we have disco-  
 r Sins and Infirmities, we are apt to  
 flight of them, and not to entertain  
 e of their Guilt and Deformity which  
 y deserve. *Make me sensible, O God,  
 n Vileness by reason of my Sins, which  
 roach to my Reason, as well as contra-  
 thine essential Purity. Let me search  
 y wicked Ways, that I may forsake  
 nlighten my Eyes, that I may not  
 lindness and Hardness of Heart.*

t apart some Time every Evening to  
 pose. The longer this Work is de-  
 he more Difficulty there is to per-  
 aright. Several Instances of our  
 nd Infirmity may slip out of our Me-  
 and we may possibly forget Things  
 tance to us: But by charging our  
 s only with the Actions of a Day,  
 easily recollect the whole Time, from  
 to our going to Bed: So that be-  
 commit ourselves to sleep, we may  
 eg God's Pardon for the Sins of the  
 thankfully acknowledge the Blessings

This Method will make our Exa-  
 easy and advantageous to us; the  
 ig Day may teach us to grow wise by  
 s of the present; and we may learn to  
 keep

keep our Guard in the right Place, that the same Sin may not surprize us.

III. Seriously *consider the End and Design of examining yourself.* The Point we should aim at, should be to understand the true State and Condition of our Souls; what Temptations we are most liable to, and what Occasions most easily overcome us; what Virtues we are most defective in, and what Sins generally prevail upon us: Without proposing something of this Nature to ourselves, our Search will be but lost Labour, and our Examination will never pass for an Instrument of Religion: But if we use it as we ought, it will make our Repentance full and complete, because it will extend to all those Particulars wherein we have transgressed God's Laws; it will promote our Increase in Piety and Virtue, by making us sensible where we fall short, and what Measures are necessary to make us acceptable in God's Sight. By this Means we may prevent the insupportable Weight of the Sins of a whole Life falling upon us all at once, when, it may be, we may not have sufficient Presence of Mind to recollect ourselves, much less to perform any proper Act of Repentance. We ought particularly to consider the weakest Parts of our Minds, by Nature and Custom least defensible; because there lies our greatest Danger, and there ought to be our greatest Watchfulness.

IV. Examine *yourself in relation to those Sins you have committed by your Thoughts*. For so far as your Thoughts are subject to the Laws of God, so far are they capable of the Breach of them. As thus: *Have I employed them in contriving and compassing any forbidden Thing; either to gratify Revenge, or to fulfil the Lusts of the Flesh? Have I entertained any dishonourable Opinion of God? any groundless Suspicions to the Prejudice of my Neighbour? any proud and arrogant Conceits of my own Worth?* For pious Opinions of God, charitable ones of our Neighbour, and humble ones of ourselves, are Duties incumbent upon our Minds. But as for other irregular Thoughts, which spring upon our Minds, whether we will or not, and are no farther Sins than they are Principles of a sinful Choice; here the chief Enquiry must be, *Have I endeavoured to throw them from me? Have I delighted to dwell upon them? Have I consented to them?* For according as we assent or dissent to those first Motions which are out of our Power, so will our Thoughts have the Notion of virtuous or sinful Thoughts.

V. Examine *yourself in relation to those Sins you have committed by your Words*. By thy Words thou shalt be justified, and by thy Words thou shalt be condemned. Our Words being more under our Government than our Thoughts, we shall be called to a stricter Account for them: For though the Tongue be an

an unruly Member, yet it is in our Power to chain it up by Silence, which is the securest Method, when any Temptation offers of transgressing its Bounds. Thus you must examine : *Have I been guilty of Evil-speaking ? Have I aggravated it by speaking ill of my Parents or Governors in Church or State ? Have I divulged any Ill I knew of them, when neither Justice nor Charity required it ? Have I in my Anger uttered injurious Words ? Have I, by false Words, by Lying, excused myself, and defrauded others ? Have I been guilty of profane Swearing and Curfing ? Have any obscene Words, and such as tend to corrupt Men's Minds, proceeded out of my Mouth ? any Words that grieve and afflict my Neighbour ?* He that offends not in his Tongue is a perfect Man, and must have his Duty always in his Eye. Now Conversation being one of the chief Ways of employing our Time, especially for a great Part of the World, our Words must be of greater Moment, either to our Justification or Condemnation.

VI. Examine *yourself in relation to those Sins you have committed by your Actions ; to discover which you must enquire : Did I in waking, dedicate my first Thoughts to God ? Did I perform my Morning Devotions ; and with what Attention and Fervour of Mind ? Have I followed my Labour and Business with Diligence ? Have I exercised exact Justice and Honesty in my Calling ? Did I offer my Actions*  
of

*to God, that they might be pleasing to him? Have I been punctual in the particular Duties of my Station; as a Servant, as a Master, &c. Did I at my Meals say Grace? Was I moderate and temperate in the Use of God's Creatures? Have I conversed with Candour and Affability? Have I endeavoured to make my Conversation useful and profitable unto others? How have I improved the Leisure I have had? If you have diverted yourself, examine, Whether it was with Innocence, and within the Bounds of Christian Moderation? If you have received particular Mercies, Whether you have been thankful? If you have had any Opportunities of doing Good, Whether you have embraced them? If Temptations have assaulted you, Whether you have resisted them? A few Minutes before our Evening Devotions, will serve to recollect all the Actions of the Day.*

VII. *Particularly examine your Sins of Omission.* We shall certainly be called to an Account for neglecting to do such Things as God commands, as well as for doing such Things as he forbids; therefore we ought to examine ourselves as to these: *Have I frequent and serious Thoughts of God? Do I maintain in my Mind firm Purposes and Resolutions of obeying him? Do I constantly perform the Duties of divine Worship? Do I serve him with Devotion? Am I active and zealous in doing all the Good I can to the Bodies and Souls of Men? Do I comply with the holy Inspirations of God's*

K

Spirit &

*Spirit? Have I made use of the Occasions that have presented for practising Humility, Charity, Mortification, and Patience, &c.*

It is not sufficient that we cease to do Evil, but we must learn also to do Good, or else we shall never be qualified for that Happiness which God has promised to his faithful Servants.

*VIII. Confess to God with hearty Sorrow, and Resolution of Amendment, whatever you have been guilty of in Thought, Word or Deed.*

The Design of Examination being in order to beg Pardon for those Sins and Frailties we have committed, the Sight and Sense of our Vileness should make us solicitous to find a Remedy, which can only be had from the infinite Mercy of God, through the Merits of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ: But then it is our Part to qualify ourselves for the Exercise of this Mercy; we must confess and forsake our Sins, before we can be made capable of Forgiveness: we must sincerely repent, before we can partake of that Pardon our blessed Saviour has purchased for us. And if we have a true Sense of our past Follies, and expect Forgiveness from God, we must renew our Resolutions of better Obedience, and firmly purpose to stand upon our Guard, that the same Temptations may not overcome us: And though we may sometimes be foiled in the Combat, never to be discouraged:

raged ; knowing that we shall be Conquerors *if we faint not,*

IX. *Set apart a longer Time upon some Occasions for this Purpose : As on Fasting Days, and in the preparatory Exercises for Receiving the Holy Sacrament.* A great Part of Mankind, who actually get their Living by the Sweat of their Brows, have not Leisure for so much Retirement as the Rule supposes, and yet they are not excused from Examining themselves, and from Receiving the Communion ; and therefore this preparatory Work must be performed by them in the Intervals of their Labour, and on the *Lord's Day*, which should be dedicated to the Improvement of their Minds. But such who have a Command of their Time, are obliged to employ Part of it to such excellent Purposes. Upon such Occasions, they may try themselves by some Heads of Examination, such as are collected together in several Books of Piety ; and where they find themselves guilty, they should write down the several Instances of their Crimes, with the several Aggravations ; whether committed against Knowledge ; whether with the free Consent of their Wills ; whether in Despite of the Checks of their Consciences ; whether they have been often repeated ; whether transient Acts, or settled Habits ? And upon these Occasions they must particularly observe, what previous Steps have led them to offend God, and which,

though innocent in themselves, must be avoided by them as Temptations to Sin. They may then be large in their Profession of Repentance; earnest in their Supplication for Mercy and Forgiveness; particular in their firm Purposes and Resolutions of better Obedience; importunate for further Measures of God's Grace to strengthen and enable them to the Performance of their Duty. And this they will find by Experience, that the daily Trial of themselves will facilitate these larger and more particular Examinations.

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## CHAP. XVIII.

FOR THURSDAY.

### CONFIRMATION.

AS soon as we are born into this World of Danger, the Goodness of God has provided his Ministers to dispense to us holy Baptism, and to wipe out the Guilt of our Birth, our Original Sin, by that Laver of Regeneration. When we come to riper Years, and understand what a solemn Vow, Promise, and Profession we then made, and are thereby rendered capable of making a public Profession of our Christian Faith; his  
chief

chief Ministers, the *Bishops*, to whom, as Governors of the Church, this solemn Rite is appropriated by all the primitive Records of Christianity, stand ready to *lay* their *Hands* upon us, and by fervent and *authoritative Prayer*, to *confirm* and cherish our growing Belief; procuring for us, by their praying over us and blessing us, a proportionable Degree of God's Grace and Holy Spirit, that we may be so led into the Knowledge and Obedience of his Word, that in the End we may attain everlasting Life. The Advantages of Confirmation are,

1. A new *Engagement to a Christian Life*. The great Business we have in this World, is to fit and prepare ourselves for the Happiness of the next: We are now Candidates for Eternity, and according as we behave ourselves in this our State of Pilgrimage, so will our Lot and Portion be happy or miserable for ever. The stronger therefore our Engagements are, to live according to our Christian Profession, the more probable it is we shall succeed in the Discharge of it: This solemn Rite therefore is of great Advantage to us, because it is a lasting Admonition and Check, not to dishonour our Christian Profession, when we have publicly, in the Face of the Congregation, declared our Resolution to live and die in the Faith and Obedience of a Disciple of the blessed JESUS; because it is a perpetual Warning not to desert the

Banner of the Captain of our Salvation, having declared that we will fight under it to our Lives End.

2. *It is a Testimony of God's Favour and Goodness to those that receive it.* Considering what potent Enemies we have to encounter, the Devil, who by his Subtlety is ready to deceive; the World, which by its Flattery is ready to betray us: and the Flesh, a domestic Enemy at hand to ruin us; nothing can be a greater Blessing than divine Grace, to enable us to encounter all their various Attacks. Now this is conveyed to us in this solemn Rite, by the authoritative Prayer of God's lawful Minister, ordained among other Ends for this very Purpose. Besides this lawful Minister, declaring that God accepts our Proficiency, and advancing us to an higher Degree in the Church, by placing us among the Faithful, and giving us a Title to approach the Holy Table of the Lord, is a farther Mark of God's Kindness and Indulgence towards us; for hereby we are admitted to the most intimate Act of Communion with God, and are in a particular Manner made Partakers of the Benefits of that all-sufficient Sacrifice, whereby God the Father is rendered favourable and propitious to repenting Sinners.

3. *It preserves the Unity of the Church.* Were all young People duly prepared by such necessary Instructions as ought to precede

chief Ministers, the *Bishops*, to whom, as Governors of the Church, this solemn Rite is appropriated by all the primitive Records of Christianity, stand ready to *lay* their *Hands* upon us, and by fervent and *authoritative Prayer*, to *confirm* and cherish our growing Belief; procuring for us, by their praying over us and blessing us, a proportionable Degree of God's Grace and Holy Spirit, that we may be so led into the Knowledge and Obedience of his Word, that in the End we may attain everlasting Life. The Advantages of Confirmation are,

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was a Covenant stipulated between God and them : He was pleased graciously to condescend to adopt them for his Children, and to give them a Title to everlasting Glory ; and they engaged to avoid every Thing that was evil, whether tempted to it by the *Devil*, the *World*, or the *Flesh* ; to believe all those Doctrines that were revealed by Jesus Christ, and to keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and to persevere in the Practice of them. So that in this Covenant, the Favours and Blessings God promises, are made upon Condition we perform our Part. All this should be well understood, before we ratify our Baptifinal Vow ; for though to entitle us to the Privileges of Baptifm, the Church admits of Proxies, who promise for us ; yet ratifying it personally at an Age of Understanding, she requires we should be instructed in the Nature of it ; which is necessary in order to our Practice.

II. *In the Nature of that Obligation they lie under to perform it.* Though their Sureties made this Promise for them in their Infancy, yet they must always remember, that they made it in their Name and Stead, and that the Engagement is really their own ; and that as sure as the Privileges of Baptifm belong to them, so sure are they obliged to make good the Conditions of it. As Members of Christ's Church, they stand bound to observe all those Rules that constitute that Society :

ciety: Now the great Reason why Christ gave himself for us, was, *to purchase to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.* As God's Children, they are obliged to imitate their heavenly Father in his moral Perfections; and that great Honour and Privilege certainly requires Observance and Obedience. As Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, they are obliged not to forfeit their Title, which we can never be made Partakers of, but by a patient Continuance in Well-doing.

III. *In the Nature of the holy Rite that is performed.* Now this plainly appears to be a public consenting to that Promise their Sureties made for them, and ratifying it before the Church, and promising themselves, that they will evermore endeavour faithfully to observe such Things as they, by their own Confession, have assented unto: Whereupon the Bishop solemnly blesses them; and having received Authority thereunto, prays over them, that they may receive the ordinary Gifts of God's holy Spirit: But the Church being for some Time settled, the Holy Ghost governs it by secret and invisible Communications; and these common Graces are obtained by such as are qualified to receive them, and seek them in a regular and Ministerial Way. They who are preparing themselves for Confirmation; should frequently read over the Office composed for

that Purpose, which clearly explains the Nature of it.

IV. *In the Character of that Church Officer who administers it.* This it is possible, may seem unnecessary to some People; but if our Youth were early instructed in the Nature of a Church, as a Society; and that the Governors of it, called Bishops, are Successors to the Apostles, and receive their Commission by a divine Authority, it would have a mighty Influence upon the future Conduct of their Lives! they would not be tossed to and fro, and carried about with every *Wind of Doctrine by the Sleight of Men, and cunning Craftiness wherby they lie in wait to deceive*; they would become stedfast to the Communion of the Church by Principle, which is the only Means to secure them true Members. Now the preparing for Confirmation seems to be a proper Time for such Instruction; because the Candidate then first finds a Bishop's Presence necessary to perform the Office.

V. *They should prepare themselves farther by Prayer and Fasting.* After all the Pains we have taken to inform ourselves in the Nature of our Duty, we must beg of God that He would open our Eyes, that we may see the wonderful Things of his Law; it is from Him that our Understandings must receive Light to discover our Duty, and our Wills Strength and Ability to perform it; and therefore to  
Him

Him we must address for that Temper and Preparation of Mind, that may qualify us to receive the happy Effects of this solemn Rite : And in order to make our Prayers more effectual, we should accompany them with Fasting; a Duty all along observed by devout Men, and acceptable to God, under the Old and New Testament, both as it was helpful to their Devotion, and as it became a Part of it.

VI. By a *sincere Repentance for their past Sins*. Nothing is a greater Let and Hindrance to the Influences of God's Holy Spirit, than the cherishing and indulging any Breach of his holy Laws : It is not reasonable to expect any Testimony of his Favour and Kindness, as long as we remain in a State of Rebellion against Him; now by consenting to any known Iniquity, we offer the greatest Affront imaginable to the divine Majesty; and therefore if we pretend to receive the Influences of his Holy Spirit, we must reconcile ourselves to Him by an humble Confession of our past Follies; by an hearty Sorrow for having offended Him; and by sincere and effectual Resolutions of better Obedience for the Time to come : This Repentance will qualify us to partake of the Mercy of God, which, for the Sake of Christ's Sufferings, He is ready to bestow upon all those that seek Him with their whole Heart.

VII. By a *serious Resolution of living answerably to their Obligations*. By this solemn and public Profession of our Faith, we may impose upon Men, because they cannot discover the Secrets of our Hearts; nay, Charity obliges them to think us sincere, if they have not full Evidence to the contrary: But God, whose particular Attribute it is to know the Heart, is privy to our most retired Thoughts; and consequently, if we engage only out of Custom, and in Compliance with the Fashion of the World, as He rejects our pretended Dedication of ourselves to his Service, so he may withhold that Grace which commonly attends this Ordinance, since we render ourselves unworthy of the Influences of it, by never really designing what we openly appear to profess. As you value therefore the Blessings of this holy Rite, you must seriously resolve to practise what you solemnly engage to perform; you must endeavour to bring your Life to a Conformity with that Pattern you have now proposed; this may draw down the present Assistances of God's Holy Spirit, and may dispose him to pity those Frailties and Infirmities, to which Surprise and Temptation may expose you, by granting farther Measures necessary for your Recovery. In order to this Purpose, it will be very fit frequently to read over the Offices of *Baptism* and *Confirmation*, whereby you will be acquainted with the

Blessings

Blessings you may expect, and the Duties you are obliged to perform,

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CHAP. XIX.

FOR FRIDAY.

*Receiving the Communion.*

**THIS** is justly reckoned one of the most important Actions of our holy Religion; whereby as we distinguish ourselves to be the Disciples and Followers of the blessed Jesus, so we are admitted to the highest Act of Communion with Him. If Men were more sensible of their Duty in frequenting the Lord's Table, it is impossible they should run to that Excess of Wickedness which now too generally abounds among us; and if they who do approach more regularly, would endeavour to trim their Lamps, and to spiritualise their Affections, true Christian Zeal would increase insensibly; and we should not find that Backwardness and Indifferency to every Thing that is Good.

*Imprint, O God, upon my Mind, a just Sense of this important Duty, and let all my Approaches*

*proaches to thy Holy Table be governed with profound Humility and hearty Devotion.*

That we are obliged frequently to receive the Holy Communion, appears,

I. From *the positive Command of our blessed Saviour*. Before he entered upon the last Scene of his Sufferings, he celebrated the Jewish Sacrifice of the Passover with his Disciples, and then, at the Conclusion of it, substituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood, as the Christian Sacrifice, in the Room of the Passover; and ordained it as a Rite to invoke his Father by, instead of the manifold and bloody Sacrifices of the Law; and then obliges all the following Ages of Christians to persist in the same Practice by his express Command: *Do this in Remembrance of me*. How can we pretend to be his Disciples, if we neglect this plain and public Declaration of his Will? How can we call him Master, if we do not what he commandeth us? Has the blessed Jesus instituted a solemn Worship among Christians, and shall Christians refuse to partake of it? Did he leave this last Injunction to his Followers, when he was laying down his Life for their Sakes; and shall they, who pretend to be his Followers, never concern themselves in complying with his dying Command? To persist in the constant Neglect of this positive Precept of the Christian Religion, is inconsistent with the solemn Vow of our Baptism, and  
contradicts

contradicts that Character we profess, of being the Disciples of Jesus Christ. *Pardon, O blessed Saviour, my past Neglect: I am now convinced that thou requirest my Attendance at thy holy Table; that thou hast commanded me to commemorate thy dying Love; and I am resolved to give Thee this Instance of my Obedience to thy holy Will. I am satisfied that thy infinite Goodness and Mercy will bear with my Imperfections, but nothing can excuse my Neglect of thy express Command.*

II. *From those great Wants we labour under.* Men must be very great Strangers to themselves, if they are not acquainted with the Impotency and Corruption of their Nature; they must know but little of their Circumstances in this World, if they are not aware of those Enemies which are continually designing their Ruin: There are few so happy and so steady in their Duty, as not sometimes to deviate from it; the Strength of Temptation, and the Violence of Passion, too frequently prevail upon us. Now if we were duly affected with those Wants we labour under, we should certainly apply ourselves to the Use of such Remedies as are proper to relieve them: To this Purpose, nothing is so effectual as a frequent Participation of the Lord's Supper: This will purify our corrupt Nature, by applying the Merits of Christ's Blood: This will strengthen our Weakness, by communicating the Influences of his  
Grace.

Grace which he has purchased for us by his Death : This will support us under all Temptations, by a lively Representation of those great Things Christ has suffered for us : This will restore that Peace and Quiet to our Souls which Sin robs us of : by ratifying our Pardon, and making our sincere Repentance acceptable to God. This will subdue the Violence of our Passions, by spiritualizing our Affections, and by placing them upon right Objects. *The Sense of my Follies have hitherto, O Lord, discouraged my approach to thy Altar ; but I am now convinced, there is no Remedy that will cure them, but thy Body and Blood ; and since I am resolved to get rid of my Sins, they shall no longer prevail upon me to absent myself from thy Table, where the Bread of Life is so freely dispensed to those that seek it with their whole Heart.*

III. From the End and design of this holy Sacrament. Our great End of this Christian Sacrifice was, to perpetuate the Memory of the greatest Blessing that was ever bestowed upon the Sons of Men ; to be a standing Monument of the infinite Love of our dying Redeemer, who thought not his Life too dear to purchase eternal Salvation for us. Now if we have a due Sense of those great Things He has done for us ; if we value the Wonders of his Love ; and set a just Price upon that Redemption he has purchased for us ; surely we shall not be backward to do what

what in us lies to publish to all the World this unparalleled Instance of Goodness, to testify our Gratitude for such inestimable Favours, and to offer our humble Tribute of a thankful Heart. What Sense have they, O Lord, of thy Love, who refuse to perpetuate the Remembrance of it? What Regard have they to the inestimable Sacrifice of thy Death, who neglect the best Opportunities of applying to their own Souls the Merit of it? *I love Thee, O Lord, and therefore I will approach thy Altar; I am desirous that all the World should love Thee, and therefore I will declare the Wonders thou hast done for the Children of Men.*

IV. From the *Danger of neglecting it.* We must consider, it is not an indifferent Thing, whether or no we approach the Lord's Table; and by abstaining, we in vain think to secure ourselves. It is true, when we do not receive, we cannot draw upon ourselves the Punishment of unworthy receiving; but then we run into another Extreme, which will be equally pernicious to us. To neglect and refuse the Advantages that are provided for us at God's Table, and to which we are so earnestly invited, loudly proclaims our Contempt of them; we declare our Resolution to continue in our Sins, if we refuse an Opportunity of procuring our Pardon: We are not much concerned to do our Duty, when we avoid those Occasions of improving our  
Strength,

Strength, and receiving that Grace, without which it is impossible to perform it. And can we continue in this Neglect without offending God, who has made it our Duty? Can we despise his Grace, without increasing our Guilt, and provoking his Wrath and Indignation against us? We expose our eternal Salvation by leaving undone the Things which he has commanded, as well as by doing those Things He has forbidden. *Lord, I will come to thy Table, that I may declare how much I value those good Things thou hast there provided for me; and that I may avoid that Guilt which Absence will certainly expose me to.*

That you may be qualified frequently to participate of this holy Sacrament,

I. Inform *yourself carefully in the Nature and End of this sacred Institution.* We can never offer an acceptable Service to God, if our Minds are wholly ignorant of the Nature of those Duties we perform: And therefore that our Approach to the Altar may turn to our Profit and Advantage, our first Step must be, to learn what is meant by this holy Action. Now this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was ordained for a continual Commemoration of the Sacrifice of Christ's Death, and of the Benefits we receive thereby. Our Saviour, by suffering Death upon the Cross, made a full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World; and as He intercedes for us,  
by

by Virtue of this Sacrifice, in Heaven: so we on Earth commemorate this his Sacrifice on the Cross, by offering Bread and Wine, which, after Consecration, become the Symbols of his Body and Blood, which in this Sacrament are represented to God the Father, that through the Merits of the Death of Christ He may be favourable and propitious to us. The Remembrance of that Pardon of Sins, and of that Title to eternal Happiness, which He has purchased for us, are proper to encourage our Repentance, and our Perseverance in all holy Purposes to the End of our Lives. When we have once possessed our Minds with that necessary Knowledge which relates to this holy Action, it will continue a standing Qualification in all our future Communions: So that as this Sacrament was established for the Commemoration of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, it does also convey the Benefits of it to all those who sincerely believe, and heartily repent of all their former Sins.

II. *Constantly endeavour to live as becomes a Christian.* The best Preparation for the Sacrament, is a Life governed by the Precepts of the Gospel; for he that really believes the Christian Religion, and makes it his constant Business to perform what our Saviour has enjoined, has all that substantial Preparation which qualifies Christians to partake of this holy Ordinance, and ought therefore

therefore to receive when any Oppor presents; for this holy Sacrament doe so much oblige us to new Duties, as it en us to make good those Obligations which Profession of Christianity has already upon us. Therefore let a Man exam himself never so much, fast never so strict and pray never so long and so fervently, his Life has not been pious towards God, ju towards his Neighbour, and sober in reference to himself; or at least, if he does not take vigorous and effectual Resolutions of making it such for the Time to come, all those other Duties in which he employs himself for some Time before he receives, will never be able to make him a fit Guest at God's Table; they are indeed good preparative Helps, when they tend to repair those Breaches that Sin has made in our Souls; but without steady and fixed Purposes of Amendment, they are of no Value in the Sight of God, and consequently will not be able to qualify us for a worthy Participation of Christ's Body and Blood. In vain we approach the holy Altar, if our Lives prepare not the Way for our Offerings. This may justly deter all such Sinners who receive it out of Custom, and in order to qualify themselves for a good Employment; but all sincere Christians who are wearied and grieved with the Burden of their Sins, ought not to be discouraged; because here they will find  
their

their proper Remedy; here they will meet with that Strength and Assistance which is so necessary to enable them to lead that holy Life which they purpose for the Time to come.

III. *Examine yourself before you receive the Holy Sacrament.* Frequent Examination of your Consciences, is one of the best Instruments of a Christian Life; and therefore it ought not to be neglected, when we have Time and Leisure to make any considerable actual Preparation. The Reason whereof is, that when we make a solemn Profession of Repentance, we ought to be particular in confessing our Sins to God, and in bewailing the several Aggravations of them. Now it is impossible to do this to Purpose, except we search into our own Minds, and compare our Actions with the Rule of God's Laws: But as to this Point, I refer you to the Chapter concerning *Examination*; wherein you may be informed in the Way and Manner of it: All that I shall say at present is, to recommend it as very fit to be practised, when we are preparing ourselves to approach the holy Table of the Lord: For if ever we are concerned to search out all our wicked Ways, and to forsake them, it is certainly when we remember the infinite Love of our Saviour in suffering for them.

IV. *Exercise solemn Acts of Repentance.* When you have discovered your Sins by Examination,

amination, you must confess them to God, with Shame and Confusion of Face, with a hearty Sorrow for having committed them, and with a full Purpose and Resolution of forsaking them for the Time to come; without this Temper of Mind, it is impossible we should be fit Guests at the Lord's Table; for this was the End of his Death, which we there commemorate, to reconcile us to God, by turning us from our Iniquities. The Merit of his Death will deliver none from the Punishment due to Sin, who do not make use of that Grace he has purchased to overcome the Power and Dominion of it. With what Confidence can we pretend to commemorate our Saviour's Sufferings, if we do not renounce and detest the Occasion of them? How can we expect to be received with Favour and Kindness by our Lord, if we do not declare War against all his Enemies? If we do not prosecute and torment those sinful Lusts and Affections which tormented and crucified Him? *O may I approach this awful Mystery with penitential Preparation, and a Heart fully disposed to love Thee!*

V. Stir up in your Minds a most thankful Sense of the Benefits of Christ's Death. What better becomes the Remembrance of such invaluable Kindness, than Gratitude and Thankfulness? And what so proper to make us heartily and affectionately thankful, as the Consideration of those great Evils our Saviour  
has

has delivered us from, and of those great Blessings He has purchased for us? Pardon and Peace for the Relief of our Sin-sick Souls, Grace and Assistance for our weak and impotent Minds, and eternal Happiness, to reward our sincere, though imperfect Obedience. The Nature of these Gifts are most excellent in themselves, and are still more endeared to us by the Price he paid for them, even his most precious Blood. And can such astonishing Kindness, that stooped at no Difficulties, and was discouraged by no Provocations be ever fitly remembered, without a due Acknowledgment of such Blessings, without a high Value and Esteem of them, and without our utmost Endeavours to make all possible Returns! *Let the Remembrance of thy Death, O Lord, set all the Powers of my Soul on work, that I may desire and pant after Thee, that I may admire and adore Thee, and with Praise and Thanksgiving receive Thee into my Heart, and entertain Thee always with Joy and Gratitude.*

VI. *Exercise Charity to those that have offended you.* When we go to commemorate that infinite Love which took Pity of us when we were his Enemies, it becomes us to lay aside all Resentment against those that have injured us. Can we dispute whether we should forgive a Hundred Pence, when the vast Debt of Ten Thousand Talents has been remitted to us? In this Memorial of my Saviour's

viour's Sufferings, I see how He did forgive me, how He did love me when I was his Enemy. The Remembrance of such Love should work me into a Conformity with it, and should make me desirous and ready to be reconciled to all those that have offended me; to be at Peace with all the World, as I desire to be loved and forgiven, and to be at Peace with my Saviour. Shall not we forgive other Men, who are undone ourselves, unless we are forgiven? Or how can we have the Confidence to ask Pardon, when we find no Inclination in our Hearts to grant it to others? *O my God, all that have any Way injured me, I freely forgive for thy Sake, O do thou forgive them, and incline them to that brotherly Charity, which is the Badge and Mark of thy Disciples.*

VII. *Relign up your whole Man, Body and Soul, to your Saviour's Service.* By commemorating the Sacrifice of his Death, you acknowledge the Purchase He has made of you, even at the Price of his own Blood; and therefore who can pretend a juster Claim to you? Should not He have the Benefit of your Service, who has paid so dear for it? Especially considering He will put you to no Use, but what will be to your infinite Advantage. If we were at Liberty, it is certain, we could not dispose of ourselves to more Profit; for He loves us better than we do ourselves, and wants neither Wisdom, nor Power,

Power, nor Inclination, to make us happy. But now we add Injustice to our Folly, if we refuse Him that Obedience which is due to Him; and therefore every considerate Man will never suffer the World and the Flesh to usurp any Empire over his Heart, which is his Saviour's Property, and which, without Reserve, ought to be His. Let therefore your Understandings be employed in the Contemplation of Divine Truth, your Wills in choosing and embracing every Thing that is good, and let your Affections be set on Things above; let your Body be governed with Sobriety and Chastity; that so the whole Man being devoted to your Saviour, as a reasonable, holy, and lively Sacrifice, you may receive the Benefits of his all-sufficient Sacrifice upon the Cross, and of that commemorative Sacrifice you are now about to offer.

VIII. *Settle in your Soul a lively Faith in God's Mercy through Christ.* A true Sense of our own great Unworthiness will be apt to make us despond, if we are not supported with a stedfast Belief of the infinite Goodness of God, manifested in the Work of our Redemption. The Corruption of our Nature is so great, and our Practices have been so vile and heinous, that a thorough Sight of them might make us despair, if we had not an affectionate Reliance on the Merits and Mediation of the crucified Jesus. Now, if

we believe Christ to be our Lord and Master, we shall honour and obey Him: If we believe him to be our great Benefactor, we shall take all Occasions to express our Love and Gratitude: If we believe that his Death procured for us the Pardon of our Sins, we shall heartily repent of them: if we believe that it purchased the Assistances of God's Holy Spirit, we shall endeavour after them; if we believe that it gave us Title to eternal Life, we shall do whatever he has commanded. The sure Method of fixing a lively Faith, of receiving the happy Effects of God's Mercy through Christ, must be founded in the Sincerity of our Endeavours in performing those Conditions, upon which our Saviour has promised such great Salvation. *We are happy, O Lord, upon any Terms to obtain thy Favour: If thou hadst commanded some great Thing, should we not have done it? How much more when thou only requirest us to wash and be clean?*

IX. *Relieve the Wants of your Fellow-Christians.* When we go to commemorate so much Bounty and Liberality exercised towards us, can we refrain from making the Poor and Necessitous share in the good Things we enjoy? We must be ready to do Good to all Men, because they are God's Creatures; but necessitous Christians must partake of our Beneficence, because they are Members of the same Body, and are particular

cular Objects of the Mercy and Tenderness of our blessed Saviour. Besides, this is made one of the great Signs and Marks of the Sincerity of our Love to God; for *whoso hath this World's Goods, and seeth his Brother have Need, and shutteth up his Bowels from him how dwelleth the Love of God in Him?* And when shall we be concerned to evidence the Sincerity of our Love to God, if not when divine Love displays itself to us, in the bleeding Wounds of the suffering Jesus?

X. *Spiritualize your Affections by fervent Prayer.* In our Preparatory Exercises for the Holy Sacrament, Prayer ought to have its due Proportion, because it helps us to that Temper of Mind which makes us welcome Guests at God's Table, and fills our Thoughts with such spiritual Objects as are proper to entertain them upon such Occasions. We must lay aside, as much as we can, our Thoughts of Business and Affairs, when we solemnly approach God's Presence; and should apply our Minds entirely to such spiritual Subjects as the Christian Sacrifice naturally suggests to us. Now Prayer, in its own Nature, takes off our Thoughts from the Things of the World, and all sensible Entertainments, and raises them to the Consideration of God, and those good Things that concern our eternal Salvation. It by Degrees masters our evil Habits, by impressing a lively Sense of our Duty, and fortifies

us against Temptation, by the Strength it communicates to us. And therefore when we design to approach the holy Table, we should prepare the Way by Devotions that particularly relate to that Subject, and by being more exact in attending the public Prayers of the Church. We must take Care not to prescribe such a burdensome Method to ourselves, as to make it grievous to us to go through it; nor so long a one, as should make us neglect receiving, when we are by any unforeseen Accident prevented in going through with it. It is our Duty to communicate; and provided we are serious and sober in our Lives, we must not neglect an Opportunity, though we have not Leisure for all that actual Preparation which we sometimes, to our great Edification, make use of; because in such Cases, when we have not Time, that actual Preparation ceases to be a Duty: And therefore the want of it must never be pleaded as an Apology for our not receiving the Holy Communion.

## CHAP. XX.

FOR SATURDAY.

*Hearing Sermons.*

**I**T has always been reckoned one Part of the Office of the sacred Function to explain the Scriptures, and to make Discourses of Piety and Religion to the People, which is generally called *Preaching*; and it has been esteemed a Part of the People's Duty seriously to attend such Discourses: And although the great Corruption of the present Age, gives one but too much Reason to complain of the small Fruit and Effect it has upon the Lives of Men, yet it is in itself an admirable Means, when performed with Seriousness and Judgment, to instruct the Ignorant; to reclaim the Wicked and Profane; to awaken and rouse the careless Sinner, and to confirm and strengthen well-disposed Minds in their good Resolutions. What if weak People have given it the Preference to other more valuable Parts of Christian Worship; yet the Strong ought not to despise it, since those who are the best instructed, may want to be stirred up to the Practice of their Duty. Indeed it is wonderful, that so few are

wrought upon by those pious and seasonable Discourses which are so frequently delivered from the Pulpit; that so few are persuaded to entertain sincere Purposes of reforming their Lives. To discover the Causes of this great Evil, will be a good Step towards a Remedy, and it will appear chiefly to proceed,

I. From *the Power of some evil Habits*. The constant Practice of any known Sin has a very great Influence upon the Understanding, and indisposes it to apprehend the Force of those Arguments that are urged to expose the Horror of Vice, and to persuade us to hate and forsake it. When we are once blinded by any irregular Passion that is indulged, we easily resist the Checks of our Consciences, and put a Bar to all those powerful Persuasions which should work upon us. This Disposition somewhat partakes of the Nature of a Mother's Fondness toward her Child, which prevents her perceiving it to be ever in the wrong, and thinks it lovely, notwithstanding all its Faults, and cannot bear that any one should reprove it. The Will being thus corrupted, insensibly debauches the intellectual Faculty, and inclines it to make a wrong Judgment of Virtue and Vice; and persuades it to call Evil Good, and Good Evil. Now how is it possible that a Sermon should work upon a Man that is prepossessed with such false Notions; that disputes the most evident Principles, and resists the clearest

clearest Arguments, and hears without the least Desire of reforming himself? If ever we expect to receive any Benefit from the Preaching of serious Truths, we must endeavour to cleanse our Hearts from all Iniquity, and from the Sin that does most easily beset us; we must prepare the Ground of our Hearts, so that the good Seed may fructify in us; we must pray to God, earnestly and frequently, that he would be pleased to assist us in removing all those Hindrances, which prevent the Influences of the most moving Discourses; and that he would stir up in us sincere Desires of reforming our Lives. *Nothing, O God, is too hard for the Operation of thy Grace! Rectify my corrupt Will, that it may never put a false Bias upon my Understanding; and work in me such a Disposition and Temper of Mind, that I may receive Profit and Advantage from all the pious Exhortations of thy Ministers.*

II. *From Ignorance of the Principles of Religion.* Some People have been so neglected in their Education, that they are not acquainted with the Grounds of their Christian Profession; they know not either what they are obliged to believe, nor what they are obliged to practise: Now though Sermons may sometimes stir up in such Minds Desires of reforming their Lives, yet they are so much at a Loss how to put them in Execution, that it in a great Measure deprives them of the Advantage of such holy Motions: Now

when the Grace of God touches the Hearts of such Persons, they ought to apply themselves to their spiritual Guides, and enquire of them what they should do to be saved: If they can read, they should procure some pious Books, that will direct them in the Manner of performing their Duty to God, their Neighbour and themselves; and which will lead them, as it were, by the Hand through the whole Course of their Christian Duties: Thus St. *Paul*, upon his Conversion, was admonished by a Voice from Heaven to apply himself to *Ananias*; and it is reported of St. *Augustin*, when he was touched to change his Course of Life, that he heard a Voice which ordered him to consult the Epistles of the great Apostle, where he found all those Directions which were necessary to guide him in his present Circumstances. *I lament, O God, the Ignorance and Blindness of my Mind; Instruct me in all the Particulars of my Duty; and grant that I may apply myself to all those Means thou hast established, in understanding those great Things thou requirest of me.*

III. From the false Apprehensions of the Impossibility of doing their Duty. They have so long indulged their vicious Inclinations, which they have strengthened by ill Habits, that the Difficulty of reforming them damps all their Attempts. Among all the Temptations of the Devil, this appears the

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dangerous, because it naturally inclines Men to despair of a Change : But it is at the same Time the least plausible ; because nothing is more chimerical than this pretended Impossibility. Men must form an extravagant Opinion of the Goodness of God, to imagine that he solicits them by the Voice of the Preacher to any Thing they are not able to perform : He knows our Abilities better than we do ourselves, and provided we do but sincerely resign ourselves to the pressing Instances of his Word, he stands always ready to supply us with supernatural Strength, which will make it not only possible, but easy to conquer our most inveterate Habits. *I am resolved, O Lord, that I will no longer be discouraged by my own Vileness : Though my Sins be as Scarlet, thou canst make them as white as Snow : though they be red like Crimson, through thy Grace they may become as Wool.*

To the End that you may receive Profit and Advantage from the Word of God preached to you ;

I. *Attend to what you hear.* The most edifying Discourses can have no Effect upon us, if we do not give them the Attention of our Minds ; for Arguments do not work like Charms, but so far prevail upon us, as we consider the Force and Power of them. To work ourselves up to this Attention, we must remember that the Word preached comes from the great God of Heaven and Earth ;

that the Message delivered is from the King of all the World; that through the great Uncertainty of Life, it is doubtful whether we shall enjoy such another Opportunity of being instructed in our Duty; that if we trifle away the present Season of God's gracious Invitation, we may in vain lament the Loss of it to all Eternity. These Considerations should discharge our Minds of all vain and wandering Thoughts; we should not be careless or negligent when Matters of such great Importance are laid before us; for what can be able to provoke us to serious Attention, if Things that relate to our eternal Happiness or Misery, have not Power to prevail upon us to listen to them?

II. *Beg the Assistance of God's Grace to make the Word preached effectual to you.* All Ordinances for our spiritual Improvement, receive their Power and Efficacy from the Co-operation of God's Holy Spirit; we may hear the Words, and comprehend the Sense of the Arguments; but it is the Grace of God that touches our Minds with the Weight and Moment of them. But we have no Reason to expect this supernatural Influence, if we neglect to desire it; and it is no Wonder Men hear Sermons so frequently, to very little or no Purpose, when they miscarry in this preparative Work; when they go out in their own Strength, and apprehend no Want of that Assistance which is necessary for their  
2 Illumination.

Illumination. Say therefore with *David*, the Royal Prophet, *Lord, open thou mine Eyes, that I may see the wondrous Things of thy Law; make me to understand the Way of thy Precepts.*

III. Endeavour to remember what you hear. It is not to be imagined that all People have Memories good enough to carry away the entire Discourse that is made; but if they hear attentively, it is impossible but that something that is delivered will stick with them, especially if they endeavour to carry something away with them. It is not enough that we are affected with the Sermon, our greatest Duty is still behind, which is, to put those good Instructions into practice. Now, how is it possible to perform any Thing, if we remember nothing? Our Care therefore must be, to store our Memory, at least, with the great End and Design of the Discourse; and we must carry away with us what the Preacher chiefly aimed at: Something will affect us, and that we must make our own. Let us therefore follow *St. Paul's* Advice. *To give the more earnest Heed to those Things that are spoken, lest at any Time we should let them slip.*

IV. Apply what you hear to your own Soul. If we do not think ourselves particularly concerned in what is delivered by the Minister, we shall neither attend nor remember what may redound to our Profit and Advantage; and except we apply Instructions to our

own Case, we shall advance but slowly in any spiritual Improvement. The Seed brings forth no increase in the Granary, it must be thrown into the Ground before it will fructify; if the Nature of any Duty is explained, we must consider whether we truly understand it; if several Instances of it are laid down before us, we must consider how far we come up to them in our Practice. If Directions are prescribed to get the Mastery of any Vice, we must consider how far we comply with them; and where we are defective, we must resolve to take those new Measures that are offered. If the Deformity and Ingratitude of Sin is exposed, we must shun it as the greatest Evil. If the Advantages and Pleasures of Virtue are described, we must secure them to ourselves by an unwearied Continuance in Well-doing. This Method put in Practice, will certainly intitle us to the greatest Profit imaginable from Preaching.

V. Hear *without Prejudice*. It were to be wished that all the Priests of the Lord were circumspect in their Lives, and blameless in their Conversation; but since they are Men, clothed with Flesh and Blood, and liable to the same Temptations that others are exposed to, their Personal Infirmities should not so far possess People's Minds, as to deprive them of the Advantage of their good Instruction. So far as the Ministers of God fall short of their Duty, they will themselves  
answer

answer for the Neglect of it; but still the People must give an Account for not improving under their frequent Calls to Repentance and Amendment of Life. Let not therefore any particular disadvantageous Character so far insinuate itself into you, as to rob you of the Profit and Advantage of a good Discourse: Consider what is said, more than any Report that may diminish the Preacher's Reputation; which very often may be false, and yet, if true, may be really no Hindrance to your own Improvement, if you make a right Use of the Sermon.

VI. *Resolve to practise what you hear.* If Men come only to a Sermon, to gratify their Curiosity with the Beauties and Ornaments of a Discourse; if they only aim at increasing their Knowledge, that they may be the better able to talk concerning the Mysteries of the Gospel; it is no Wonder that their Lives continue unreformed. The great Advantage of the Christian Institution is, that it offers to the World a better Method, and a more exact Rule for the Conduct of Life, than was ever known before; and if you really design any Profit to yourself by understanding it, you must immediately put it in Practice. Judge not therefore of your Improvement by those good Desires that may be stirred up in your Mind, but by the Influence the Instructions have upon your Practice. You hear a Discourse on Humility to some Purpose, when  
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from the Sense of Conviction, you submit to the lowest and meanest Offices for promoting the Welfare of your Fellow-Christians. You profit by a Sermon upon the Duty of Family Prayer, if, having hitherto neglected it, you immediately establish it in your Families: The like Instances might be made in any other Virtue, or in any other Divine Institution. The great End of Hearing is not fulfilled when we are affected with a Sermon, the main Matter is still behind, which is, the putting useful Instructions into Practice; nay, the Convictions we receive of the Necessity of performing our Duty, will increase our Condemnation at the great Day, if we do not govern our Lives by them.

VII. *In your Retirement reflect upon what you heard.* This is the concluding Means of making the Preaching of the Minister profitable and advantageous to you; it is like Digestion to our Victuals, it turns out into true Nourishment. The Pleasures and Diversion of the World are apt to blot out those serious Thoughts which were impressed upon our Minds in the Church; the Cares and Business of the World are apt to choke the Word, so that it brings no Fruit to Perfection. To remedy these Hindrances of our spiritual Edification, we must take a convenient Opportunity to retire from Business and Pleasure; and surely on the Lord's Day nothing should prevent it; and when we are by ourselves,  
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we should seriously reflect upon those great and useful Truths which have that Day been delivered to us. We should consider the Importance of them, to excite our Industry and Diligence in attaining them, we should weigh the Excellency of them, that they may engage our Affections; we should reflect how necessary they are to our Happiness, which will discover our own Folly in having neglected them hitherto, and make us truly wise for the Time to come. When we have thus made them familiar to our Thoughts by Consideration, they will be ready at Hand for all the Uses and Purposes of a Christian Life: They will direct us in our Duty, when it becomes dubious or difficult, and always stir us up by Way of Remembrance; they will make us steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, so that our Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

[ 232 ]

THREE

H Y M N S,

FOR

MORNING, EVENING,

AND

MIDNIGHT;

FROM BISHOP KENN'S MANUAL

FOR WINCHESTER SCHOLARS,

WITH

DEVOTIONS *for the CLOSET; and for the*  
*FAMILY, and at the HOLY COMMUNION;*  
*and upon several other Occasions.*

---

A MORNING HYMN.

I.

AWAKE, my Soul, and with the Sun,  
Thy daily Stage of Duty run;  
Shake off dull Sloth, and early rise  
To pay thy Morning Sacrifice.

Redeem

II.

Redeem thy mis-spent Time that's past;  
Live this Day, as if 'twere thy last:  
'T' improve thy Talents take due Care;  
'Gainst the great Day thyself prepare.

III.

Let all thy Converse be sincere,  
Thy Conscience as the Noon-day clear:  
Think how th' all-seeing God thy Ways,  
And all thy secret Thoughts surveys.

IV.

Wake, and lift up thyself, my Heart,  
And with the Angels bear thy Part;  
Who all Night long unwearied sing  
Glory to Thee, Eternal King.

V.

Awake, awake ye heav'nly Choir;  
May your Devotion me inspire:  
That I like you my Age may spend;  
Like you may on my God attend.

VI.

May I like you in God delight;  
Have all Day long my God in Sight;  
Perform like you my Maker's Will:  
O! may I never more do Ill.

Glory

## VII.

Glory to Thee, who safe hast kept,  
And hast refresh'd me whilst I slept;  
Grant, Lord, when I from Death shall awak  
I may of endless Life partake.

## VIII.

Lord, I my Vóws to Thee renew;  
Scatter my Sins as Morning Dew;  
Guard my first Spring of Thought and Will  
And with thyself my Spirit fill.

## IX.

Direct, controul, suggest this Day,  
All I design, or do, or say;  
That all my Powers, with all their Might,  
In thy sole Glory may unite.

## X.

Praise God, from whom all Blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all Creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, y' Angelic Host:  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

AN EVENING HYMN.

I.

GLORY to Thee, my God, this Night,  
For all the Blessings of the Light:  
Keep, O keep me, King of Kings,  
Under thy own Almighty Wings.

II.

Forgive, me Lord, for thy dear Son,  
The Ills that I this Day have done;  
That with the World, myself, and Thee,  
I; ere I sleep, at Peace may be.

III.

Teach me to live, that I may dread  
The Grave as little as my Bed;  
Teach me to die, that so I may  
Triumphing rise at the last Day.

IV.

O may my Soul on Thee repose,  
And with sweet Sleep mine Eyelids close:  
Sleep, that may me more vig'rous make,  
To serve my God, when I awake.

When

*A Midnight Hymn.*

## V.

When in the Night I sleepless lie,  
 My Soul with heav'nly Thoughts supply:  
 Let no ill Dreams disturb my Rest,  
 No Pow'rs of Darkneſs me moleſt.

## VI.

Let my bleſt Guardian, whiſt I ſleep,  
 Cloſe to my Bed his Vigils keep;  
 Divine Love into me inſtil,  
 Stop all the Avenues of Ill.

## VII.

Thought to Thought with my Soul converſe,  
 Celeſtial joys to me rehearſe;  
 And in my Stead, all the Night long,  
 Sing to my God a grateful Song.

## VIII.

Praiſe God, from whom all Bleſſings flow;  
 Praiſe Him, all Creatures here below:  
 Praiſe Him above, y' Angelic Hoſt;  
 Praiſe Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.

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 A MIDNIGHT HYMN.

## I.

LORD, now my Sleep does me forſake  
 The ſole Poſſeſſion of me take:  
 Let no vain Fancy me illude,  
 No one impure Deſire intrude:

II.

My Soul; when I shake off this Dust,  
Lord, in thy Arms I will intrust :  
O make me thy peculiar Care,  
Some heav'nly Mansion me prepare.

III.

Give me a Place at thy Saints' Feet,  
Or some fall'n Angel's vacant Seat :  
I'll strive to sing as loud as they,  
Who sit above in brighter Day.

IV.

O may I always ready stand,  
With my Lamp burning in my Hand :  
May I in Sight of Heav'n rejoice,  
Whene'er I hear the Bridegroom's Voice.

V.

Glory to Thee, in Light array'd,  
Who Light thy Dwelling-place hast made :  
An immense Ocean of bright Beams  
From thy all-glorious Godhead streams.

VI.

The Sun in its Meridian Height,  
Is very Darkness in thy Sight :  
My Soul O lighten, and inflame  
With thought and Love of thy great Name.

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Blest Jesu ! Thou, on Heav'n intent,  
Whole Nights hast in Devotion spent ;  
But I, frail Creature, soon am tir'd,  
And all my Zeal is soon expir'd.

## VIII.

Shine on me, Lord, new Life impart,  
Fresh Ardors kindle in my Heart :  
One Ray of thy all-quickning Light  
Dispels the Sloth and Clouds of Night.

## IX.

Lord, lest the Tempter me surprise,  
Watch over thine own Sacrifice ;  
All loose, all idle Thoughts cast out,  
And make my very Dreams devout.

## X.

Praise God, from whom all Blessings flow ;  
Praise Him, all Creatures here below :  
Praise Him above y' Angelic Host :  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

*A Morning Prayer for a Child.*

**GLORY** be to Thee, O Lord, for all the Blessings I daily receive from Thee; for thy particular Preservation and Refreshment of me this Night past, but above all, for thy infinite Love in redeeming me by the precious Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ.

Teach me to believe in Thee, to fear Thee, and to love Thee with all my Heart; to worship Thee, and to give Thee Thanks; to honour thy holy Name, and to serve Thee truly all the Days of my Life.

Make me to love my Neighbour as myself; and to do unto all Men, as I would they should do to me; make me obedient to my Parents, and to all my Governors in Church and State.

Grant, O Lord, that I may order myself lowly and reverently to all my Betters; that I may hurt no Body by Word or Deed; that I may keep my Hands from Picking and Stealing, and my Tongue from Evil-speaking, Lying and Slandering; that I may demean myself with Temperance, Sobriety, and Chastity; that I may never covet or desire other Men's Goods, but learn and labour truly to get my own Living, and to do my Duty in that State of Life to which it shall please Thee, O Lord, to call me. And all  
this

240 *An Evening Prayer for a Child.*

this I beg for the Merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour ; in whose holy Words I sum up all my Wants ; saying,

OUR Father which art in Heaven ; Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this Day our daily Bread. And forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into Temptation ; but deliver us from Evil. For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

THE Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with me this Day, henceforth, and for evermore. *Amen.*

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*An Evening Prayer for a Child.*

O LORD GOD, my heavenly Father, I do most humbly implore the Pardon and Forgiveness of all my Sins, especially of those I have committed this Day, either in Thought, Word, or Deed, for the Sake of thy Son Jesus Christ. Cleanse me from all my Wickedness, strengthen my Weakness, that I may overcome all the Temptations that daily surround me.

*Affist*

Assist me, good Lord, by thy Grace, that I may worship Thee, serve Thee, and obey Thee as I ought to do. Supply me with all Things needful while I live in this World, and fit and prepare my Soul for the Happiness of the next. Make me to avoid all Occasions of offending Thee; and suffer me not to be tempted above what I am able; but defend me in all Dangers both of Body and Soul! keep me especially from Sin and Wickedness, and from everlasting Death.

I commend to thy divine Providence (*my Father and Mother, my Brethren and Sisters*) and all my Friends and Relations; vouchsafe them all those Graces and Blessings thou knowest most suitable for them.

O Thou that never sleepest nor sleepest, watch over me this Night, and refresh me, with seasonable Rest, that I may rise the next Morning more fit for thy Service.

I return, O Lord, to Thee all Praise and Thanksgiving, for all those Mercies Thou hast this Day bestowed upon me. As long as I live I will praise the Lord; as long as I have any Being, I will magnify thy holy Name. Hear my Prayers and accept of my Praises, for the Sake of my Saviour Jesus Christ; in whose holy Words I sum up all my Wants,

Our Father, &c.

THE Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.  
Amen.

M

*A Morning*

*A Morning Prayer for a Person in private.*

**ALMIGHTY** and eternal God, who hast created me after thine own Image and Likeness; who hast made me capable of loving Thee and enjoying Thee eternally; I adore Thee with all Humility as my Sovereign Lord; give me, I beseech Thee, such a Sense of thy infinite Goodness, as to return unto Thee all possible Love and Obedience.

O my God, upon whom all Things depend, I acknowledge that I have nothing but what is the Effect of thy Bounty: bless the Lord, O my Soul, and declare his Loving-kindness to all Generations. I humbly and heartily thank Thee for all the Graces and Favours thou hast bestowed upon me; for making me a rational Creature, and for securing my Preservation by the constant Effects of thy Providence; for redeeming me by the Death of thy Son, and for providing the Grace of thy Holy Spirit to sanctify my corrupt Nature; for bringing me to the Knowledge of the Christian Religion; for blessing me with plentiful Means of Salvation; and for preparing a glorious Inheritance for those that love Thee, and keep thy Commandments; for the many Temporal Blessings Thou hast conferred upon me; for repairing the Infirmities of my frail Body with  
comfortable

comfortable Rest and Sleep; for the Preservation of me this Night, and the rest of my Life, and from innumerable Accidents and Dangers; O! may I always delight to praise and glorify thy holy Name, and above all thy Benefits to love Thee, my great Benefactor.

O Father of Mercies, shut not up thy Bowels of Compassion towards me, a vile and miserable Sinner; despise not the Work of thine own Hands, the Purchase of my Saviour's Blood. I most humbly implore the Pardon and Forgiveness of all my Sins, whether of Omission or Commission, for the Sake of Jesus Christ thy only Son our Lord; I am heartily sorry that I have offended Thee; I detest my Sins because they are displeasing to Thee, who art infinite Goodness: I am resolved, by the Assistance of thy Grace, to return no more to Folly, to avoid all Occasions of Evil, and to live better for the Time to come.

I dedicate to Thee, O Lord, my Body and Soul, and all that I am; and because through the Weakness of my mortal Nature, I can do no good Thing without Thee, grant that all I shall do or suffer this Day, by the Help of thy Grace, may tend to thy Glory, and the Salvation of my own Soul.

Enlighten my Mind with a true and thorough Knowledge of my Duty, and enable me by thy Holy Spirit to perform it with

Care and Diligence. Make me sensible of my own Vileness and Corruption, and let me never want thy gracious Assistance to correct and reform it. Let me frame a right Judgement concerning the Vanity and Emptiness of all transitory Enjoyments, that they may never prevail upon me to transgress thy holy Laws; but that by the Contempt of them, I may fix my Heart upon those Pleasures which are at thy right Hand for evermore. And grant that all the Afflictions of this Life, which Thou in thy wise Providence shalt think fit to lay upon me, may turn to my spiritual Profit and Advantage; that I may bear them with Patience and Submission to thy holy Will, and thereby learn greater Gratitude to thy Goodness for the Mercies I enjoy. Let no anxious or solicitous Cares ever disorder or distract my Mind, but let me trust in thy Providence to bless my honest Diligence: being assured, that if I seek first the Kingdom of God, and its Righteousness, all other Things shall be added unto me.

Defend me by thy Almighty Power from all those Snares and Temptations which continually solicit me to offend Thee; and from all those bodily Dangers to which I am subject in this my Pilgrimage hereupon Earth; that all my Thoughts, Words and Actions, may be so guided by thy Holy Spirit, that I may ever seek thy Honour and Glory; and that the main Concern of my Life may be, to fit  
and

and prepare myself for that everlasting Salvation Thou hast promised.

Keep me all this Day in Innocence, and in Love to Thee, and to all Men: Let me

manage all my Temporal Affairs with Uprightness and Integrity; and converse with Candour and Affability; do Thou direct my Paths, and teach me to guide my Affairs with Discretion: but let not the Pursuit of the Things of this Life, rob me of that Time which ought to be employed in the Concerns of my Soul, nor divert me from the serious Thoughts of the World to come; that walking faithfully before Thee all my Days, and being found watching when my appointed Time shall come, I may from a Life of Righteousness be translated to a Life of Glory.

*On Sunday, instead of the opposite Paragraph, say this :*

And now I am going to the Place of thy public Worship, let thy Holy Spirit assist me in the Duty and Service I am about to perform; touch me with such a Sense of thy Presence as may fix my wandering Thoughts, compose my tumultuous Affections, stir up my flat and cold Desires, that I may be devout, serious, and attentive. Let me join in the Prayers and Praises of the Church with fervent and heavenly Affections. Let me hear thy Word with great Attention, and with a Resolution of Mind to practise my Duty; and whenever I approach thy Table, let me shew

forth Humility and Devotion, and all those holy Desires which become the Remembrance of a crucified Saviour. Let me ever esteem it my Privilege and Happiness to have a Day of Rest set apart for thy Service, and the Concerns of my Soul; and let me employ it to all those holy Purposes Thou hast appointed.

Extend, O Lord, thy Pity and Compassion to the whole Race of Mankind: Enlighten the Gentile World with the Knowledge of thy Truth, and bring into thy Flock thy ancient People the Jews, and let all who name the Name of Christ depart from all Iniquity. Be gracious to thy holy Catholic Church; Grant that she may always preserve that Doctrine and Discipline which Thou hast appointed, and that the Gates of Hell may never prevail against her. Grant, O Lord, that all my Governors in Church and State may be useful and serviceable to thy Glory, and the public Good, remembering the great Account they must one Day give. Be merciful to all that are in Affliction or Distress, that labour under Poverty or Persecution, under Bodily Pains or Diseases, or under Temptation or Trouble of Mind; be pleased to support and comfort them, and in thy good Time to deliver them, according to thy great Mercy. Bless all my Friends, Relations and Acquaintance; those that are in Sin, convert them;

them; those that are in Grace, confirm and strengthen them; those that are in Adversity, comfort and relieve them; and those that are in Prosperity, suffer them not to forget Thee. Unite us all, O God, to one another by mutual Love, and to thyself, by the constant Practice of Piety and Holiness.

Make me mindful of that Time when I shall lie down in the Dust; and because I know not the Day nor the Hour, when I shall be summoned to the great Tribunal, let me be always upon my Guard, and never live in such a State as I shall be afraid to die in; but that my daily Care may be, to get my Soul raised more and more into such an holy, heavenly Temper, such Delight in God, such unspotted Purity, and fervent Charity, as may best qualify and prepare me for the Company of Saints and Angels in thy heavenly Kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord; in whose blessed Name and Words I conclude my imperfect Prayers, saying,

Our Father, &c.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with me this Day, henceforth, and for evermore. *Amen.*

*A Prayer for a Person that daily works at his Trade, to be added to the former Prayer.*

**ALMIGHTY** God, who in thy wise Providence hast constituted several Ranks and Qualities of Men, that they might mutually subsist to the Support of each other: Teach me to be content with the Station wherein Thou hast been pleased to place me: Grant that I may honestly and diligently discharge the Duties of my Calling; and without Anxiety depend upon thy Blessing for the Success of my lawful Endeavours. That however contemptible my Profession may be in the Eyes of Men, my Fidelity and Industry may be acceptable in thy Sight: That they may bring me in Return a convenient Subsistence for my Family in this Life; and in the next, the Reward Thou hast promised to all those that truly love and fear Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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*An Evening Prayer for a Person in private.*

**MOST** great and glorious Lord God! I desire to prostrate myself with all Humility before thy divine Majesty, under a deep Sense of my own Unworthiness: With Shame and Sorrow and Confusion of Face, I  
confess

confess and acknowledge thy infinite Mercy and Goodness to me, and my own Vileness and Ingratitude to Thee. I have, O Lord, abused thy Gifts and Blessings, despised thy Goodness, neglected thy Service, preferred my Passions and other Creatures, before my Duty and thy Commands. I have neither believed in Thee, O my God, nor obeyed Thee, nor loved Thee as I ought, and as I solemnly vowed I would. O Lord God, most gracious and reconcileable, pity and pardon me; I lament, O Lord, my detestable Impiety, for having so long, and so often, and so obstinately offended Thee. I confess and will forsake my Wickedness, and am sorry for my Sins. It grieves me, O most amiable Goodness, it grieves me that ever I offended Thee; with all my Heart, O my God, do I now renew the sacred Vow, which alas! I have so often violated. I utterly renounce, O Lord, all Things that may any way displease Thee; from them all let it be thy good Pleasure to deliver me. I know, Lord, I cannot love Thee but I must hate Evil; and therefore I renounce and detest it. Turn Thou me, O Lord God, and so shall I be turned; turn the whole Stream of my Affections from sensual Love to the Love of Thee. O my God, let thy heavenly Love be the constant Bias of my Soul; O may it be the natural Spring and Weight of my Heart, that it may always

move towards Thee. Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy Sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son; but I return with the Prodigal: O let thy paternal Bowels yearn over me, and for Jesus Christ his Sake, graciously receive me. Lord, accept of my imperfect Repentance, and send thy Spirit of Adoption into my Heart to instil true filial Affections, that I may again be owned by Thee for thy Child, and call thee Father, and Share in the Blessings of the Children, and at last become an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.

O my God, fill my Soul with so entire reverential a Love of Thee, that I may love nothing but for thy Sake, or in Subordination to thy Love. Give me Grace to study thy Knowledge, that the more I know Thee, the more I may love Thee. Create in me a sincere Obedience to all thy Commands, a submissive Patience under all thy Chastisements, and an absolute Resignation unto all thy Disposals.

Make me, O Lord, so tender of thy Honour, that I may shew a due Regard to all the Parts of thy Worship: That I may always enter thy House with recollected Thoughts, composed Behaviour, becoming Reverence, and sincere Intentions of Love; that I may hear thy Word with a serious Attention and inflameable Heart, and a particular Application; that I may frequent the

public Prayers, and approach thy Table with fervent, and heavenly Affections, and with holy Impatience for the Blessings of thy Love. Give me Grace, for thy dearest Sake, to pay a suitable Veneration to all sacred Persons, or Places, or Things, which are thine by solemn Dedication, and separated for the Uses of divine Love, and the Communications of thy Grace, or which may promote the Decency and Order of thy Worship, or the Edification of faithful People.

May I ever, O Lord, have awful Thoughts of Thee; may I never mention thy venerable Name, unless on solemn, just, and devout Occasions; may I never mention it on those Occasions without Acts of Love and Adoration. O let it be the great Business of my Life, to love and glorify thy holy Name by all the possible Ways I can; by my Mouth, by my Conversation, by my public Confession of Thee before Men, even to Death, whenever thou art pleased to call me to it; by engaging all I can to glorify and love Thee. Fix in my Mind an habitual pure Intention of thy Glory in all my Actions, that whether I Eat or Drink, or whatever I do, I may do all to the Glory of Thee, my God.

O Lord, let thy unwearied and tender Love to me, make my Love unwearied and tender to my Neighbour, and zealous to pro-

cure, promote, and preserve his Health and Safety, Happiness and Life; and ready to succour and relieve, to comfort and rescue, and pray for all, whom thy Love, or their own Necessities or Miseries, recommend to my Charity. Make me Peaceful and Reconcilable, always ready to return Good for Evil, to repay Injuries with Kindness, and easy to forgive; unless in those Instances, where the Impunity of the Criminal would be Injustice and Cruelty to the Public. Make me like thy own Self, all Meekness and Benignity, all Goodness and Sweetness, all Gentleness and Long-suffering. And, O thou Lover of Souls, let thy Love raise in me a compassionate Zeal to save the Life, the eternal Life of Souls, and by fraternal, and affectionate, and seasonable Advice, or Exhortation, or Reproof, to reclaim the Wicked, to win them to love Thee.

Create in me, O Lord, a perfect Abhorrence of all Impurity, that I may purify myself, as Thou, Lord, art pure. I know, O Lord, that I can never be Partaker of the Divine Nature, unless I escape the Pollution that is in the World through Lust. O do Thou therefore cleanse me from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, that I may perfect Holiness in thy Fear. Give me Grace to possess my Vessel in Sanctification and Honour, and to keep thy Temple holy, that thy Spirit may always there inhabit. Give me  
Grace,

Grace, O Lord, to fly all Incitements, Opportunities or Instruments of defiling either my Neighbour or myself; to beat down my Body, and to bring it into Subjection: Let me live ever watching or praying, or profitably employed, that I may leave no Room, if possible, for any unclean Spirit to enter into my Soul, and tempt me.

Lord, make me contented and thankful, and well pleased with that Portion thy wise Providence has allotted me in this World, and to acquiesce in thy Choice, as best for me. O let the World never more have place in my Heart; all my Affections I withdraw from that, to fix on Thee.

Be pleased, O Lord, to take me into thy Protection this Night, and defend me from all the Dangers of it; refresh my Body with such comfortable Rest and Sleep, that in the Morning, with my renewed Vigour, I may be the better disposed to do Thee all faithful Service. Let not evil Spirits or evil Men approach to hurt me; let me lie down with holy Thoughts of Thee; and when I awake, let me be still with Thee.

*Add this Paragraph on SUNDAY in the Evening.*

“ PARDON, O Lord, all those Imperfections that have accompanied me this Day, in my Attendance in thy House;  
“ forgive

“ forgive the Deadness and Dulness of my Affections, the Wanderings of my Thoughts, and the Distractions of my Mind. Sanctify to me all those Means of Grace, which by thy Bounty I have this Day been Partaker of; and help me in the Week following to live according to my Profession and my Prayers, according to the Instructions and Exhortations which I have received out of thy holy Word; that my Conversation may be as becometh the Gospel of Christ: Let me not abuse these Means by resting in them, but let them bring forth the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness.”

Shew Mercy, O Lord, to the whole World; let the Gospel of thy Son run, and be glorified throughout all the Earth; let it be made known to Heathens and Infidels; and let it be obeyed by all that are called Christians. Be merciful to this Nation wherein I live; grant that we may be so humbled and reformed, that we may be pardoned and spared. Multiply thy Blessings upon our Sovereign; and all the Royal Family; give them Grace to exceed others as much in Goodness as in Greatness, and make them signal Instruments of thy Glory, and of the Public Good. Be gracious to all those that minister in holy Things, that they may diligently watch over those Souls committed to their Care, instructing them in saving Knowledge.

Knowledge, and guiding them by their own Examples, Praying for them, and Blessing them, exercising spiritual Discipline in the Church, and rightly and duly administering thy holy Sacraments. Visit in Mercy all the Children of Affliction; relieve all their particular Necessities of Body and Mind, and lighten all their Burdens: give them Patience and Submission to thy blessed Will, and in thy due Time deliver them from all their Troubles. Bless all my Friends and Relations, let them first seek the Kingdom of God and its Righteousness, and then let all other Things be added unto them.

Adored be thy Goodness, O Lord, for whose Mercies, both Temporal and Spiritual, which Thou from Time to Time hast bestowed upon me; that thou hast supported my Body with the good Things of this Life, and that Thou hast prepared for my Soul the Happiness of the next; particularly, I desire to offer to Thee my humble and hearty Thanks for the Preservation of me the Day past from innumerable Accidents and Dangers: If I have escaped any Sin, it is the Effect of thy restraining Grace: if I have avoided any Danger, it was thy Hand directed me, and to thy holy Name for both be given all Glory and Praise. Let the Sense of all thy Blessings have this Effect upon me, to make me better, and to lead me to Repentance. And all this I beg for Jesus Christ's Sake; in  
whose

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whose blessed Name and Words I continue to pray, saying,

Our Father, &c.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

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*A Morning Prayer for a Family.*

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all Mercies, we thy unworthy Servants do give Thee most humble and hearty Thanks for all thy Goodness and Loving-kindness to us and to all Men. We bless Thee for our Creation, Preservation, particularly, that Thou hast vouchsafed to deliver us from all the Perils and Dangers of the Night past, and for all the Blessings of this Life: But above all, for thine inestimable Love in the Redemption of the World by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the Means of Grace, and for the Hope of Glory. And we beseech Thee to give us that due Sense of all thy Mercies, that our Hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we may shew forth thy Praise, not only with our Lips but in our Lives, by giving up ourselves to thy Service, and by walking before Thee in Holiness and Righteousness all our Days.

We

We acknowledge, O Lord, that our many great and crying Sins, have rendered us unworthy of any of thy Favours; but, O Almighty and Everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the Sins of all them that are penitent, create and make in us new and contrite Hearts, that we worthily lamenting our Sins, and acknowledging our Wretchedness, may obtain of Thee, the God of all Mercy, perfect Remission and Forgiveness. Raise up thy Power and come among us, and with great Might succour us, that whereas through our Sins and Wickedness we are sore lett and hindered in running the Race that is set before us, thy bountiful Grace and Mercy may speedily help and deliver us. And Thou, O God, who knowest us to be set in the Midst of so many and great Dangers, that by reason of the Frailty of our Natures we cannot always stand upright, grant to us such Strength and Protection, as may support us in all Dangers, and carry us through all Temptations.

Give unto us, O Lord, the Assistance of thy Holy Spirit, that for the Time to come we may think and do always such Things as be rightful; that we, who cannot do any Thing that is Good without Thee, may by Thee be enabled to live according to thy Will; that thy Grace may always so prevent and follow us, as to make us continually to be given to all good Works.

Graft

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Graft in our Hearts the Love of thy Name, increase in us true Religion, nourish us with all Goodness, and of thy great Mercy keep us in the same; and Thou, O God, whose never-failing Providence ordereth all Things both in Heaven and Earth, put from us, we beseech Thee, all hurtful Things, and give us those Things which are profitable for us. And since it is Thou alone canst order the unruly Wills and Affections of sinful Men, grant that we may love the Things which Thou commandest, and desire that which Thou dost promise, that so among the sundry and manifold Changes of the World, our Hearts may surely there be fixed where true Joys are to be found. Dispose us, by all the Means of Grace we enjoy, to attain that everlasting Salvation Thou hast promised, that we may both perceive and know those Things which we ought to do, and may have Grace and Power faithfully to fulfil the same.

Teach us, O Lord, so to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom; and grant that neither the Splendor of any Thing that is Great, nor the Conceit of any Thing that is Good in us, may any Way withdraw our Eyes from looking upon ourselves as sinful Dust and Ashes; but that we may press forward towards the Prize of the High Calling that is before us, with Faith and Patience, with Humility and Meekness, with Mortification and Self-denial, with Charity,

*Morning Prayer for a Family.* 259

rity, and constant Perseverance unto the End ; that so when we shall depart this Life, we may sleep in the Lord ; and at the general Resurrection in the last Day, may be found acceptable in thy Sight, and receive that Blessing which thy beloved Son shall then bestow upon all those that truly love and fear Thee.

Charge thy holy Providence, O Almighty God, we beseech Thee, with us this Day ; and vouchsafe to direct, sanctify, and govern both our Hearts and Bodies, in the Ways of thy Laws, and in the Works of thy Commandments, that through thy most mighty Protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in Body and Soul, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

*Add this Paragraph on SUNDAYS.*

“ ALMIGHTY and merciful God, of whose  
“ only Gift it cometh that thy faithful Peo-  
“ ple do unto Thee true and laudable Ser-  
“ vice ; grant, we beseech Thee, that we  
“ may so spend this thy holy Day in the Ex-  
“ ercises of Piety and Devotion, that we  
“ may hear thy Word with so much Atten-  
“ tion, and pray with so much Fervour, that  
“ we fail not finally to attain thy heavenly  
“ Promises, through the Merits of Jesus  
“ Christ our Lord.”

We

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We make our Prayers and Supplications to Thee, O everlasting God, in behalf of all Mankind. We humbly beseech Thee to inspire continually the universal Church, with the Spirit of Truth, Unity, and Concord; and grant that all they that do confess thy holy Name, may agree in the Truth of thy holy Word, and live in Unity and godly Love. We beseech Thee also to save and defend all Christian Kings, Princes, and Governors; especially thy Servant our Sovereign. Grant that all inferior Magistrates may truly and indifferently minister Justice, to the Punishment of Wickedness and Vice, and to the Maintenance of thy true Religion and Virtue. Give Grace, O heavenly Father, to all Bishops and Curates, that they may both by their Life and Doctrine, set forth thy true and lively Word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy Sacraments. And of thy great Goodness, O Lord, comfort and succour all them, who, in this transitory Life, are in Trouble, Sorrow, Need, Sicknes, or any other Adversity. Look upon them with the Eyes of thy Mercy, give them sure Trust and Confidence in Thee, and in thy due Time a happy Issue out of all their Afflictions. Assist all those who draw near the Time of their Dissolution; so fit and prepare them for the Hour of Death, that after their Departure in Peace, and in thy Favour, they may be received into thy everlasting Kingdom, through

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he Merits and Mediation of thy only Son Jesus Christ our Lord; in whose blessed Name and Words, we conclude our imperfect Prayers, saying,

Our Father, &c.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us this Day, henceforth, and for evermore. *Amen.*

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*An Evening Prayer for a Family.*

**ALMIGHTY** God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all Things, Judge of all Men, we acknowledge and bewail our manifold Sins and Wickednesses which we from Time to Time most grievously have committed, by Thought, Word, and Deed, against thy divine Majesty; provoking most justly thy Wrath and Indignation against us: We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our Misdoings; and the Remembrance of them is grievous unto us.

Have mercy upon us, O Lord, after thy great Goodness, according to the Multitude of thy Mercies do away our Offences; wash us thoroughly from our Wickedness, and  
cleanse

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cleanse us from our Sins. Spare all those who confess their Sins unto Thee, that they whose Consciences by Sin are accused, by thy merciful Pardon may be absolved; and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please Thee in Newness of Life, to the Honour and Glory of thy Name.

And Thou, O God, who art the Protector of all that trust in Thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, increase and multiply upon us thy Mercy, that Thou being our Ruler and Guide, we may so pass through Things Temporal, that we finally lose not the Things Eternal: And because through the Weakness of our mortal Nature we can do no good Thing without Thee, grant us the Help of thy Grace, that we may withstand the Temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, and with pure Hearts and Minds follow Thee, the only God; and that in keeping thy Commandments, we may please Thee both in Will and Deed.

O Lord, who hast prepared for them that love Thee such good Things as pass Man's Understanding, pour into our Hearts such Love towards Thee, that we loving Thee above all Things may obtain thy Promises, which exceed all that we can desire. And Thou, who hast taught us that all our Doings without Charity are nothing worth, send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our Hearts that most excellent Gift, the very Bond of Peace  
and

and of all Virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before Thee.

Grant us, O Lord, so perfectly and without all Doubt to believe in thy Son Jesus Christ, that our Faith in thy Sight may never be reproved; that being not like Children, carried away with every Blast of vain Doctrine, we may be established in the Truth of thy holy Gospel; and knowing our Saviour Jesus Christ to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and following the Steps of thy holy Apostles, we may stedfastly walk in the Path that leadeth to eternal Life: So that we, who know thee now by Faith, may after this Life, have the Fruition of thy glorious Godhead. Grant that our Hearts and all our Members being mortified from all worldly and carnal Lusts, and forsaking all covetous Desires, and inordinate Love of Riches, we may in all Things obey thy blessed Will, and continue Christ's faithful Soldiers and Servants to our Lives' End. And since Thou hast given us thy only begotten Son, to be unto us both a Sacrifice for Sin, and also an Example of godly Life, give us Grace most thankfully to receive this thine inestimable Benefit, and daily to endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed Steps of his most holy Life.

Grant, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the Death of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ; so by continually mortifying our corrupt

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rupt Affections, we may be buried with him; and that through the Grave and Gate of Death we may pass to a joyful Resurrection: Beseeching Thee, that it may please Thee of thy gracious Goodness, shortly to accomplish the Number of thine Elect, and to hasten thy Kingdom; that we, with all others already departed in the true Faith of thy holy Name, may have our perfect Consummation and Bliss, both in Body and Soul, in thy eternal and everlasting Glory.

*Add this Paragraph on SUNDAYS.*

“ O GOD, we beseech Thee mercifully to  
“ receive those Prayers, which we have this  
“ Day offered up to Thee in the public Con-  
“ gregation, and have Compassion upon our  
“ Infirmities, that our Blindness and Unwor-  
“ thiness may not deprive us of the Advan-  
“ tage of them. And grant, we beseech  
“ Thee, that we may in such wise mark,  
“ learn, and inwardly digest what we have  
“ this Day heard, that by Patience and  
“ Comfort of thy holy Word, we may em-  
“ brace and ever hold fast the blessed Hope  
“ of everlasting Life, which Thou hast given  
“ us in thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

We commit ourselves, O Lord, this Night  
to thy gracious Protection; and Thou, who  
seest we have no Power of ourselves to help  
ourselves,

ourselves, keep us both outwardly in our Bodies, and inwardly in our Souls, that we may be defended from all Adversities that may happen to the Body, and from all Evil Thoughts which may assault and hurt the Soul.

O God, the Creator and Preserver of all Mankind, we humbly beseech Thee for all Sorts and Conditions of Men, that it may please Thee to make thy Ways known unto them, and thy saving Health unto all Nations. Let thy continual Pity cleanse and defend thy Church; and because it cannot continue in Safety without thy Succour, preserve it evermore by thy Help and Goodness. Receive our Supplications and Prayers, which we offer before Thee for all Estates of Men in thy holy Church, that every Member of the same, in his Vocation and Ministry, may truly and godly serve Thee.

Finally, we commend to thy Fatherly Goodness all those who are any ways afflicted or distressed in Mind, Body or Estate: That it may please Thee to comfort and relieve them according to their several Necessities, giving them Patience under their Sufferings, and a happy Issue out of all their Afflictions.

We beseech Thee mercifully, O Lord, to incline thine Ears to us, that have made now our Prayers and Supplications unto Thee; and grant that those Things that we have faithfully asked according to thy Will, may  
N effectually

266     *A Prayer for a Sick Person.*

effectually be obtained, to the Relief of our Necessities, and to the setting forth of thy Glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord; in whose blessed Name and Words we conclude our imperfect Devotions, saying,

Our Father, &c.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

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*A Prayer for a Sick Person; to be added upon Occasion, either to the Closet or Family Prayer.*

O FATHER of Mercies, and God of all Comfort, our only Help in Time of Need, we fly unto Thee for Succour, in Behalf of thy Sick Servant lying under thy Hand in great Weakness of Body. Visit *him*, O Lord, with thy Salvation, and deliver *him* in thy good appointed Time from that bodily Pain and Sickness which *he* now labours under: prolong *his* Days here upon Earth, that *he* may live to Thee, and be an Instrument of thy Glory, by serving Thee faithfully, and doing Good in *his* Generation. In the mean Time, O Lord, grant that *he* may take *his* Sickness patiently, and entirely submit to thy blessed Will. Sanctify, we beseech

beseech Thee, this thy Fatherly Correction to *him*, that the Sense of *his* Weakness may add Strength to *his* Faith, and Seriousness to *his* Repentance; give *him* Comfort and sure Confidence in Thee; defend *him* from the Danger of the Enemy; and keep *him* in perpetual Peace and Safety, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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*A Prayer for a Sick Person, when there appeareth small Hope of Recovery.*

**ALMIGHTY** and immortal God, the Aid of all that need, the Helper of all that fly to Thee for Succour; we call upon Thee in Behalf of thy Servant, who now lies in a dangerous and very languishing Condition. Look graciously upon him, O Lord, and the more the outward Man decayeth, strengthen *him*, we beseech Thee, so much the more continually with thy Grace and Holy Spirit in the inner Man; give *him* unfeigned Repentance for all the Errors of *his* Life past, and steadfast Faith in thy Son Jesus, that *his* Sins may be done away by thy Mercy, and *his* Pardon sealed in Heaven, before *he* go hence, and be no more seen. Grant that whatever Defilements *his* Soul may have contracted in the Midst of this miserable and sinful World,

268 *A Prayer for one Troubled in Mind.*

through the Lusts of the Flesh, or the Wiles of Satan, may be purged and done away by the Blood of that immaculate Lamb, that was slain to take away the Sins of the World; so that it may be presented pure and without Spot before Thee. We know, O Lord, that there is no Work impossible with Thee, and that if Thou wilt, thou canst yet raise *him* up, and grant *him* a longer Continuance among us; yet forasmuch as in all Appearance the Time of *his* Dissolution draweth near, so fit and prepare *him*, we beseech Thee, against the Hour of Death, that after *his* Departure hence in Peace, and in thy Favour, *his* Soul may be received into thine everlasting Kingdom, through the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ, thy only Son our Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

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*A Prayer for a Person under Trouble of Mind.*

O BLESSED Lord! The Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort; I beseech Thee, look down with Pity and Compassion, upon me thy afflicted Servant. Unto Thee do I cry for Help, O Thou great Physician of Souls; uphold and comfort my weak and dejected Spirit: Strengthen it against all inordinate vain Fears and Terrors; and deliver

liver me from all those unprofitable Troubles and Scruples of Conscience with which I am oppressed. I am conscious, O Lord, that I deserve this Punishment for my past Sins, and that I reap the just Reward of my former Iniquities: But I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and truly repent of all my Misdoings; and therefore I beg, for the Sake of my Saviour's Merits, that by thy Pardon and Peace I may be cleansed from all my Sins, and may serve Thee with a quiet Mind all my Days. Let my present Uneasiness and Disorder make me humble and patient, and teach me to put my Trust and Confidence in Thee. I entirely submit to thy blessed Will, till thou shalt think fit to remove the Torment I groan under, beseeching Thee, in the mean Time, to enable me to bear it by the Support of thy holy Spirit; and when I am prepared for so great a Mercy, deliver me from my Trouble; lift up the Light of thy Countenance upon me, and give me Peace, through the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ my blessed Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

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*A Prayer before a Journey.*

**ALMIGHTY** God, in whom all Things live, move, and have their being; who dost govern all Things by thy wise Providence, and whose Protection is my only Defence

270 *A Thanksgiving after a Journey.*

and Security; I humbly beseech thy divine Majesty, to give thy holy Angels charge over me in the Journey I am now about to undertake. Let no Temptation that may offer itself, prevail upon me to transgress any of thy holy Laws; but let the Power of thy Grace secure me in all those Places and Companies, where my Occasions shall lead me. Let not the Freedom and Liberty of Conversation at such Times, make me forget those Rules which my Christian Profession obliges me to; neither let the Kindness nor Hospitality of others betray me to the least Excess either in Eating or Drinking. Defend me from Thieves and Robbers, that lie in wait to exercise Acts of Violence; and protect me from all Dangers and evil Accidents which may disturb or annoy me: Preserve my going out, and my coming in; let thy Providence be my Guard, thy Grace my Defence, and thy blessed Self my Portion, both now and for evermore, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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*A Thanksgiving after a Journey.*

**ALMIGHTY** God upon whom all Things depend, who redeemeth our Life from Destruction, who crowneth us with Loving-kindness and tender Mercies, who is greatly  
to

*A Thanksgiving after a Journey* 271

to be praised, and whose Greatness is unsearchable, blessed be thy holy Name, that Thou hast brought me safe to the End of my Journey; that Thou hast preserved me from innumerable Accidents and Dangers to which I have been exposed. It is of thy Mercy that my Health has been continued to me, notwithstanding those various Circumstances that might have impaired it. It is of thy Goodness that no evil Men have made any Assault upon me, when others have suffered by their unjust Violence. It is from thy Providence, that I have been protected from Falls, so that not one Bone is broken. How many unforeseen Dangers, O Lord, hast thou delivered me from! and how many that have threatened me, hast thou over-ruled! Lord, thou hast made me glad through the Operation of thy Hands, and I will triumph in thy Praise: And let my Heart be always ready to express my Thankfulness, not only by my Words, but by my Life, in being more obedient to thy holy Commands. Continue thy Goodness to me, that I, whom Thou hast preserved, may serve Thee in Holiness and Righteousness all the Days of my Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*A Prayer of Thanksgiving for a Person recovered from Sicknefs. To be added upon Occasion to the Closet or Family Prayer.*

**O** ALMIGHTY God and merciful Father, to whom alone belongs the Issues of Life and Death, we desire to bless and praise thy holy Name in Behalf of thy Servant, whom thou hast been pleased to raise from the Bed of Sicknefs, and to restore to *his* former Health. Thou hast perfected thy Strength in *his* Weaknefs, and hast graciously heard our Prayers, and known *his* Soul in Adversity and Trouble. Praised be thy holy Name for thy gracious Dispensation towards *him*: As long as *he* lives, let *him* praise thee; as long as *he* has any Being, let *him* give Thanks unto thy holy Name. And we beseech thee, O Lord, let the Remembrance of thy late Mercies vouchsafed unto *him*, so affect *his* Soul, that *he* may be afraid, as well as ashamed to offend Thee; that the Remainder of *his* Life may be dedicated to the Service of that God, who hath dealt so bountifully with *him*. Strengthen and confirm *him* in the Performance of all those good Resolutions *he* made in the Day of *his* Distress; and for the Time to come, let *him* place *his* chief Joy and Satisfaction in running the Way of thy Commandments,

*A Prayer for one near her Travail.* 273

mandments, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
*Amen.*

“ These Prayers may be used by the Person  
“ that is Sick, troubled in Mind, or re-  
“ covered, by changing *he* into *I*, *him* into  
“ *me*, *his* into *my*, &c.”

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*A Prayer to be used for a Woman drawing near  
the Time of her Travail; to be added to the  
Closet or Family Prayer upon such Occasion.*

**O** LORD, look down from Heaven, behold,  
visit, and relieve thy Servant, that draweth  
near the Time of her Travail; look upon  
her with the Eyes of thy Mercy, give her  
Comfort and sure Confidence in Thee; of  
thy Goodness, O Lord, let her have Strength  
and Courage to meet her Pains, Patience  
and Submission under them, and in thy  
due Time a safe Deliverance: That being  
preserved from the great Danger of Child-  
birth, she may, through thy Fatherly Care  
and good Providence, become a joyful  
Mother of a hopeful Child, which may live  
to be an Instrument of thy Glory, by serving  
thee faithfully, and doing Good in its Gene-  
ration, through Jesus Christ our Lord and  
only Saviour. *Amen.*

*A Prayer when any Person cometh into the Church.*

**ALMIGHTY** and merciful God, of whose only Gift it cometh that thy faithful People do unto Thee true and laudable Service; Grant, I beseech Thee, that I may join in the Prayers of thy Church with Reverence and Devotion, and hear thy holy-Word with Attention, and obediently follow the same; that my Thoughts and Desires being fixed on Thee, the Words of my Mouth, and the Meditation of my Heart, may be now and ever acceptable in thy Sight, O Lord, my Saviour and my Redeemer. *Amen.*

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*A Prayer after the Church is ended.*

**O LORD,** I beseech Thee mercifully to receive those Prayers which I have at this Time offered unto Thee, and let thy Word take deep Root in my Heart; and be pleased to pardon all those Imperfections that have accompanied my weak Performances. Oh! by the Use of these Means graft in my Heart the Love of thy Name, increase in me true Religion, nourish me with all Goodness, and  
of

*A Prayer before Confirmation.* 275

of thy great Mercy keep me in the same,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.  
*Amen.*

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*A Prayer to be used by any Person preparing  
for Confirmation; and which, during that  
Time, may be added to their Morning and  
Evening Prayers.*

**M**OST merciful God, by whose gracious Providence I was born of Christian Parents, and early dedicated to Thee in holy Baptism, wherein I was made a Member of the Catholic Church, whereof Jesus Christ is the Head, adopted thy Child, and entitled to the unspeakable Happiness of thy glorious Kingdom; I do most heartily thank Thee, O Lord, for calling me to this State of Salvation, and for bestowing upon me such blessed Privileges: O, dispose my Mind, by thy heavenly Grace, carefully and diligently to perform those Conditions thou requirest to qualify me for such inestimable Benefits, and that I may continue in the same unto my Life's End.

And now, O Lord, that I am preparing myself to receive a further Degree of thy Grace and Favour, which will advance me into the Number of the Faithful, by being admitted to approach thy holy Table; I

N 6

humbly

276 *A Prayer before Confirmation.*

humbly beseech Thee to enlighten my Mind with the true Knowledge and Understanding of that solemn Vow which I made in my Baptism, and which I am now about to ratify and confirm publickly in thy Presence; that I may constantly renounce the Devil, by avoiding all those Temptations by which he seeks to destroy me, and by abstaining from all those Sins which partake most of his diabolical Nature; that I may resist all covetous Desires of Honour, Riches, and Pleasure, and all those evil Customs and Maxims of the World, which alienate Men's Minds from the Love of God; that I may mortify all the inordinate Appetites of my own corrupt Nature; that I may believe all thy holy Revelations, and keep thy blessed Will and Commandments all the Days of my Life. O! instruct me in all the Particulars of my Duty, that I may herein exercise myself, to keep a Conscience void of Offence, towards God, and towards Man.

Give me, O Lord, unfeigned Repentance for all the Errors of my Life past, that my many and great Sins which I have committed, may not deprive me of the Assurances of thy holy Spirit, which I am about to receive, but let my hearty Sorrow, through the Merits of Christ, wash away all that is past, and let the Power and Strength, communicated to me from Above, mortify and subdue them for the Time to come. I am unable, O  
Lord,

*A Prayer after Confirmation.* 277

Lord, of myself, to help myself; mercifully grant, that thy blessed Spirit may in all Things rule and direct my Heart, that by his holy Inspiration I may think those Things that are good, and by his gracious Guiding may perform the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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*A Prayer after Confirmation.*

I BLESS and praise thy holy Name, O Lord God, for those renewed Assurances that Thou hast vouchsafed me, of thy Favour and gracious Goodness towards me; and though in thy infinite Wisdom Thou hast thought fit to withdraw the extraordinary Gifts of thy Holy Spirit, yet Thou art pleased to guide thy faithful Servants by his secret and invisible Communications, when they seek them in a regular and ministerial Way. O therefore! let the Blessing which I have received by the Hands of thy Servant the Bishop be with me, and remain with me, and most powerfully assist and support me in all Trials and Temptations, when I most need the Help of thy Holy Spirit.

Let Him be unto me a Spirit of Sanctification to purify my corrupt Nature; a Spirit of Counsel in all Difficulties, of Direction in all Doubts, of Courage in all Dangers, of  
Constancy

**278**    *A Prayer after Confirmation.*

Constancy in all Persecutions, of Comfort in all Troubles, especially in Times of Sickness, and at the Hour of Death; and of Submission and Resignation to thy holy Will and Pleasure in all Afflictions that are most grievous to Flesh and Blood.

Leave me not a Moment to my own human Frailty, without his Assistance; but let him constantly inspire me with Fear, Love, and Devotion towards thee; with Truth, Justice and Charity, towards my Neighbour; and with Abstinence and Sobriety towards myself.

O! make me sensible, O Lord, of that solemn and public Profession of my Faith, which I have declared in the Presence of God and the Congregation, and of those Promises of endeavouring faithfully to observe and keep thy holy Commandments, and of persevering in the same: Make me always true to these Engagements of living according to the Maxims of the Christian Religion, that walking uprightly before Thee all my Days, and being found watching when my appointed Time shall come, I may from a Life of Righteousness be translated to a Life of Glory, through Jesus Christ, my only Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

A SHORT  
OFFICE  
FOR THE  
HOLY COMMUNION.

“As soon as the Sermon is ended, while  
“ the Minister is preparing for the holy  
“ Table, we should be preparing our Minds  
“ for the worthy Participation of the holy  
“ Mysteries, by an humble Address to God,  
“ so to assist us by his Holy Spirit, that  
“ we may be fit Guests at his heavenly  
“ Banquet.”

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*A Prayer for the due Celebration of the Christian Sacrifice ; which may be used, not only at the Time of Communicating, but may be added to our Morning and Evening Prayers, when we are preparing to Communicate.*

O BLESSED God, who hast disposed me by thy Grace to approach thy holy Mysteries; who hast wrought in me a Desire to seek  
what

280 *A Prayer for the Holy Communion.*

what is so valuable in itself, and so necessary to my own Happiness; it is thy infinite Mercy which has provided such a Remedy for my Weakness, and which has not left me to perish in my own Corruption. Grant, O Lord, that I may ever be thankful for this Miracle of thy Love, and that I may partake of it in such a Manner, that my Soul may be nourished with all Goodness, that Jesus may ever live in me, and I in him.

To this End, O Lord, compose my Mind to great Seriousness and Devotion, that the Thoughts of this World may not interrupt me in my Attendance upon Thee; but that I may have such a deep Sense of thy infinite Mercy, and my necessary dependence upon Thee; such an Apprehension of thy unspeakable Goodness to poor, miserable, sinful Worms, in this holy Sacrament, that I may be awed into a becoming Reverence, and confirmed against all Disturbances and Distractions.

Enlighten, O Lord, my dark Mind with the Rays of the Sun of Righteousness; inflame my cold Heart with thy holy Love, that I may be fervent in what I ask; raise my Mind, by a lively Faith and a confirmed Hope, that I may have an assured Expectation of all necessary Supplies from thy Goodness; and give me such a true Understanding of all that is eternal, that I may at all Times remember how much it is my Concern, that

*A Prayer when we offer our Alms. 281*

my Soul should be ever longing after it, and that I should desire it with an Earnestness above all that belongs to earthly Things, and with Importunity pray for all those Helps that are necessary to bring me to the unchangeable Possession of Thee, my God, through the Merits of Jesus Christ, my only Saviour. *Amen.*

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*A Prayer when we offer our Alms.*

IT is, O Lord, the Effect of thy Goodness that I am enabled to relieve others; and the Effect of thy great Mercy that I am ready and willing to perform it. Accept, O Lord, of this Testimony of my Love and Gratitude, and make me truly thankful for all those happy Opportunities thou givest me of doing Good. *Amen.*

“ In the following Part of the Communion  
“ Service, we must be sure to join most af-  
“ fectionately with the *Priest* that officiates,  
“ and never to use our private Prayers when  
“ he calls upon us to accompany him; only  
“ in the *Exhortation*, the *Invitation*, and the  
“ *Absolution*, we should not repeat the Words  
“ after him; because in the two first he speaks  
“ to us, and in the *Absolution*, he exercises a  
Part

**282** *A Prayer before the Communion.*

“ Part of the *Priest's* Office, which does not  
“ belong to us.

“ When those Portions of Scripture are  
“ read that follow the Absolution, and are  
“ designed to beget in us a lively Faith and  
“ Confidence in God's Mercy, we should  
“ make short Ejaculations after them in the  
“ following Manner, *viz.*”

*Come unto me, &c.*

Refresh, O Lord, thy Servant wearied with  
the Burden of Sin.

*So God loved the World, &c.*

Lord, I believe in thy Son Jesus Christ,  
and let this Faith purify me from all Iniquity.

*This is a true saying, &c.*

I embrace with all Thankfulness that Salva-  
tion that Jesus has brought into the World.

*If any Man sin, &c.*

Interceed for me, O blessed Jesus! that  
my Sins may be pardoned, through the Me-  
rits of thy Death.

*A Prayer*

*A Prayer immediately after the Elements  
are consecrated.*

**I** ADORE thee, O blessed Jesus, who didst humble thyself to the Death of the Cross, that I might be redeemed from a State of Sin and Misery: I remember with all Thankfulness this thy wonderful Condescension for my Salvation. Blessed be thy holy Name for this Christian Sacrifice thou hast provided for us, to convey to us the Benefits of that all-sufficient Oblation once offered for the Sins of the World. Grant, O Lord, that the Power of it may strengthen my Weakness, and fortify me against all Temptations; that the Wisdom of it may enlighten my Mind, and cure my Ignorance; and that the Purity of it may sanctify me throughout in Body, Soul, and Spirit. *Amen, Lord Jesu, Amen.*

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*A Prayer after receiving the consecrated  
Bread.*

**I** ACKNOWLEDGE, O Lord, with all Humility, my great Unworthiness to partake of this heavenly Feast, where thou feedest all devout Minds with the precious Body and Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ; my many and great  
Sins

Sins may justly render me odious in thy Sight, as they make me contemptible in my own; and the Devil and my own Fears might so magnify the Horror of them, that they would sink me into Despondency and Dejection of Spirit, if I had not a sure Trust and Confidence in thy infinite Goodness, manifested in the bleeding Wounds of my crucified Saviour. For his Sake therefore, O Lord, I humbly beseech Thee to have Mercy upon me; for the Merits of his Death to accept of my imperfect Repentance; and by the Virtue of his most precious Blood, to cleanse me from all my Sins. Pardon, O gracious Father, my light and rash Words, my vain and impure Thoughts, and all my wicked and impious Actions, and whatever I have committed against Thee at any Time before: with Shame and Confusion, with hearty Grief and Sorrow I reflect upon all my Transgressions, and resolve, by the Assistance of thy Grace, to avoid all Sin, as the greatest Evil, for the Time to come: enable me, by the Help of thy Holy Spirit, to be constant and vigorous in this Purpose of Mind, and to serve Thee in Holiness and Righteousness all the Days of my Life.

The Purity of Angels, and the Devotion of Saints, is not sufficient to make me worthy of the Blessings of thy Table; but thy Goodness has declared, that Thou wilt favourably receive those that are sincerely grieved for  
their

their Sins, and groan under the Burden of them ; that earnestly long for their Deliverance, and desire Power and Strength to resist them, such are assured to find in thee the Bowels of a tender Father, and to be received with the Welcome of such Blessings and Graces as their Necessity requires. Grant, O Lord, that nothing may be found in me that may obstruct the happy Effects of these thy gracious Intentions towards me.

Possess me, O Lord, with such a Sense of thy Love, and such Thankfulness for all thy Favours, as may transform me into thy Likeness, and may make me ready and willing to do and suffer any Thing for thy Honour and Glory:

What couldest thou do more, O blessed Jesu, than to die upon a Cross for our Redemption, and before thy Death to institute this Pledge and Earnest of thy Love, this perpetual Memorial of thy Sufferings, that thy Church might never want the Benefits and Advantages of them?

Let that immortal Food which thou hast now prepared for me in the Holy Eucharist, insfil into my weak and languishing Soul new Supplies of Grace, that I may desire Thee above all Things as my chiefest Good, and may delight in Thee as the only Happiness of my Soul ; that I may continually think on those Joys thou hast prepared for those that love Thee, and undervalue all Things compared

pared to my Salvation; that it may be henceforth the greatest Torment I can endure to rebel against the Bowels of a loving Father, a merciful Redeemer, and a daily Benefactor; that I may no longer live according to the Principles of my natural Man, according to the false Maxims of a sinful and degenerate World; but that I may be quickened by thy Spirit, and govern all my Actions by the Dictates of thy holy Word, and be renewed after thy own Image, in Righteousness and true Holiness; that I may always press forward towards the Prize of the high calling that is before me, with Faith and Patience, with Humility and Meekness, with Mortification and Self-denial, with Charity, and constant Perseverance unto the End; that living in thy Fear I may die in thy Favour, and may be numbered among thy Saints in Glory everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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*When the Priest approaches to deliver the consecrated Bread.*

**DEAR** Jesus! my Refuge and my Joy, the chief Object of my Desires, enter into my Heart, take Possession of it, that I may continue thine for ever, and daily increase

crease in thy holy Spirit more and more,  
until I come into thy everlasting Kingdom.  
*Amen.*

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*After receiving the consecrated Bread.*

**BLESSED** be thy holy Name, O Lord, for feeding my Soul with this Bread of Life : Who can forbear being transported with Joy, that knows himself so highly honoured ? Who can contain from breaking into Songs of Praise, that is so regarded by the King of Heaven ? As long as I live I will magnify thy holy Name ; as long as I have any Being, I will sing Praises unto my God.

Let me shew my true Value for this divine Nourishment, by frequenting thy holy Table ! let me testify my real Concern for my Misery and Weakness, by being solicitous in laying hold of this best of Remedies : Let me manifest my Desire of increasing in all Virtue and Godliness, in using this surest Means to promote it. O let those Eyes be chaste, that have beheld the God of Purity ; let that Mouth be clean, that has received the Bread of Heaven ; and that Soul raised above this World, that has been refreshed with the divine Presence. Let me live to thee, who hast died for me ; and embrace all the World  
with

with Kindness and Charity, who have been favoured at this rate, notwithstanding my great Unworthiness. *Amen.*

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*When the Priest approaches with the consecrated Wine.*

O MY Soul, consider the wonderful Price of my Redemption, no less than the Blood of the Son of God : I most thankfully rejoice in this astonishing Instance of Goodness ; I will trust in it as long as I live ; this shall be the Constant Cordial to my sinking Spirit ; and I am resolved, O Lord, eternally to devote myself to thy Service, who hast purchased me at so great a Price. *Amen.*

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*After receiving the consecrated Wine.*

ALL possible Thanks and praise be given unto Thee, O blessed Jesus, for entertaining me with these Wonders of thy Love ; for admitting me, wretched Sinner to partake in the Comforts of this Christian Sacrifice. Pardon my Vileness and Unworthiness, and for the Time to come let my Heart be entirely fixed on thee ; Heal all my Infirmities

ties with the bleeding Wounds, and let thy dying Love be so imprest upon my Mind, that I may desire to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. O! let this holy Flame burn so bright in my Soul, that I may condemn all the gilded Vanities and Allurements of the World, and that it may consume all other Loves but thine.

Sanctify my Soul, O Lord, with sincere and constant Obedience to all thy holy Laws: Crown what thou hast begun, by a continual Supply of thy heavenly Grace, that I may never forget whom, or what I have received; but being purified by thy Blood, and strengthened by thy Body, against all future Temptations; I may constantly run through all the Parts of a holy Life, to the Possession of thy glorious Kingdom.

O let me diligently seek Thee, my chiefest Good. O let me earnestly desire Thee, a Being of all Perfection. O let me continually pant after Thee, the only Rest and Center of immortal Souls. *Amen.*

“ If there be any Time before the Administration of the Holy Sacrament is finished,  
“ it will be very proper to use a Prayer of  
“ *Intercession*, and a general *Thanksgiving*.

*A Prayer of Intercession.*

**GRANT, O Lord, that the Benefit of thy Son's Death may be as extensive as the Design and Intent of it; that the Heathen World may be brought to the Knowledge of Christ, and that the fulfilling of thy ancient Promises to the Remnant of thy once-beloved *Israel*, may be hastened; and that all Christians may live as becomes the Gospel of our Saviour. That all Governors may rule with Wisdom and Justice, and Subjects obey with Love and Chearfulness. That the Priests of the Lord may be found in their Doctrines, holy and exemplary in their Lives, and particularly zealous for the Salvation of Souls. That the People may be humble and tractable, most desirous to hear, and fully bent to follow wise Instructions. That the Sick and Weak may receive Health and Recovery, and the Poor and Needy Relief and Assistance. That the Widows and Fatherless, the Prisoners and Captives, may find Friends, with all those that groan under any Oppression. That the troubled in Mind may be resolved and comforted; and that all under dangerous and pressing Temptations, may be succoured and strengthened. That they who suffer for a good Conscience, may rejoice in that they are counted worthy to bear Testimony to thy Truth; and that all who have**

communicated this Day, may persevere in their pious Resolutions. Give Ear, O Lord, to these my humble Supplications in Behalf of others, for the Sake of Jesus Christ may only Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

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*A general Thanksgiving.*

ALL Honour and Praise be given to thee, O Lord God Almighty, for all thy Mercies and loving Kindnesses bestowed upon me, and for all those Blessings I expect as the Effect of thy infinite Goodness.

I bless and praise Thee for making me a rational Creature; that I was born within the Pale of the Christian Church, whereby I have enjoyed the Means of Grace, and received a Title to the everlasting Happiness of Heaven.

Blessed be thy Name for preserving me from innumerable Accidents and Dangers through the whole Course of my Life, for Help and Succour in my Wants and Necessities, for Relief and Comfort in all my Tribulations and Afflictions, for sparing me so long, and giving me so large a Time for Repentance.

But, above all, I praise and magnify thy holy Name, for the wonderful Work of our Redemption, for the perfect Pattern of our

Saviour's Life, for the Excellency of his Doctrine, and for the meritorious Sufferings of his Death and Passion.

I bless and praise Thee for all the Gifts and Graces of thy holy Spirit; for those miraculous Powers whereby Christianity was propagated throughout the World; and for those Assistances Christians have received in all Ages for the doing thy holy Will.

I bless and praise Thee for the Sense and Knowledge I have had of my Duty towards Thee, and that I have been any Ways disposed to love and serve Thee; that I have been touched with the Folly and Misery of transgressing thy Laws; and that I have made serious and strong Resolutions of conforming to them for the Time to come; and for the happy Opportunity thou hast this Day given me of approaching thy holy Table.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all the Benefits he has bestowed upon me? I will shew forth his Praise, not only with my Lips but in my Life, by giving up myself to his Service, and by walking before him in Holiness and Righteousness all my Days. *Amen.*  
*Amen.*

“ When the Minister has finished the  
“ Communion Service, conclude the Whole  
“ with a short Prayer in the following Man-  
“ ner.”

**PARDON,**

**P**ARDON, O God, those many Imperfections that have accompanied me in the Performance of this holy Duty ; and grant that those Things which I have faithfully asked according to thy Will, may effectually be obtained to the Relief of my Necessities, and to the setting forth of thy Glory, through Jesus Christ my only Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

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*A Prayer in our Retirement, after receiving the Holy Sacrament, which may be used as soon as we come Home, or be added to a Person's Evening Prayer.*

**W**HAT Thanks can I return, O most gracious God, unto thy divine Majesty, for the Opportunity thou hast this Day given me of approaching thy Altar ; for the Sense thou hast given me of my Duty, and for that Strength and Power whereby thou hast in some Measure enabled me to perform it ? I will praise and magnify thy great and glorious Name ; and I will entirely devote myself to thy Service as long as I have any Being.

Blessed be thy Name for those fresh Supplies of Grace I have received at the Holy Communion ; grant that they may make me run the Way of thy Commandments with  
5 Delight

Delight and Pleasure, that I may never any more faint, or droop, or tire in my Duty.

Blessed be thy Name for those comfortable Assurances thou hast given me of Pardon and Forgiveness. Let this thy compassionate Goodness, be a perpetual Obligation to Love and Gratitude: Let it put me upon my Guard, that I may watch over all my Ways, and do always that which is well-pleasing in thy Sight.

Blessed be thy Name for that Peace and Quiet thou hast restored to my Soul; for those Resolutions thou hast wrought in me to persevere in thy Service to the End of my Days: Make them firm, vigorous, and constant; and never let any sinful Passions any more ruffle and discompose my Mind.

Blessed be thy Name for that Relish thou hast given me of spiritual Delights, that Desire of possessing the eternal Inheritance: Let the Enjoyments of Sense appear mean and contemptible; and let not the Pleasures of the World any more prevail upon me to transgress thy holy Laws.

Grant, O Lord, that I may walk worthy of these thy distinguishing Mercies, and live as becomes the Redeemed of the Lord; remain therefore, O Lord, and abide with me for ever; I shall then be enabled to do thy Will in this Life, and thereby be qualified to partake of thy Glories to all Eternity in the next, through Jesus Christ my only Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Grace

*A Grace before Meat.*

WE acknowledge thy Goodness, O Lord, in making this Provision for us: Pardon our Sins, which render us unworthy of these and all other thy Mercies: Bless us with a thankful Use of these thy Creatures; that they may never minister to Luxury and Sensuality; but that we may be enabled, through the Strength of them, to do thee all faithful Service, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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*A Grace after Meat.*

BLESSED and praised be thy holy Name, O Lord, for that Refreshment which we have at this Time received from the Use of thy good Creatures: Teach us to labour for the Meat that endureth to everlasting Life; that as we are maintained by thy Bounty, so we may live to thy Praise, Honour, and Glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FINIS,

The following Books written by the late Excellent, and Pious ROBERT NELSON, Esq. are sold by F. C. and J. RIVINGTON, (No. 62) St. Paul's Church-yard.

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